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AUSTRALIA
ISSUE 51 OCTOBER 2015

INTRODUCING

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ELASHIRY

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NEW IT GIRL

FIGHTING ISIS

THE NEW MILE
HIGH CLUB

THE MILLION
DOLLAR FISH

HOW TO CLIMB
MOUNT EVEREST

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#DIESELHIGH

A vibrant advertisement for Diesel featuring three models. On the left, a woman with dark skin and long black hair is laughing joyfully, wearing a denim bra and light blue jeans. In the center, a woman with blonde hair is smiling and looking down, wearing a denim motorcycle jacket and light blue jeans, holding a denim handbag with a black handle. On the right, a man with dark hair is shouting with an open mouth, wearing a denim shirt and light blue jeans. The background is a mix of white and brown splatters. The Diesel logo is prominently displayed in the center.

DIESEL

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TWO GIANT
FOLD-OUT
POSTERS

MIMI ELASHIRY
AND ALINE CARA
LUNA MEIXNER



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MAXIM AUSTRALIA
PHONE +612-7900-6786
MAIL PO Box 230,
Double Bay NSW 1360
EMAIL maxim@maxim.com.au
WEB www.maxim.com.au
FACEBOOK maximau
TWITTER maxim_au
INSTAGRAM maxim_au
YOUTUBE maximaustralia

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Santi Pintado
(spintado@nuclear.com.au)
ART DIRECTOR Luke Shaddock
(lshaddock@nuclear.com.au)

MOTORING Bill Varetimidis
FASHION Adriana Dib
GROOMING Shonagh Walker
GAMING & TECH Chris Stead
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Wayne Daniels

CONTRIBUTORS

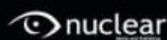
Guy Cotter, Matthew Hayden,
Winona Costin, Logan Hill,
Chris Wilson, Adam Linehan,
Max Rivlin-Nadler, Matt Berical,
Gabiella Paiella, Mélanie Berliet,
Kyle Chayka, Rick Wenner

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Charlie Bray, Akila
Berjaoui, Bobby Bruderle,
Jamie Chung, Marc Collins

ADVERTISING

National Advertising Manager
Drew Haywood
(dhaywood@nuclear.com.au)



NUCLEAR MEDIA
MANAGING DIRECTOR:
Michael Downs
MARKETING DIRECTOR:
Natalie Downs

Chairman and CEO, Biglari Holdings Inc.: Mr. Sardar Biglari

MAXIM WORLD WIDE BRAND LICENSING
VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL LICENSING Jill Tully
DIRECTOR OF BRAND MANAGEMENT, LICENSING Diana Abessera
DESIGN DIRECTOR, LICENSING Damian Wilkinson
INTERNATIONAL LICENSING & PUBLISHING MANAGER Stephanie Marino
SENIOR PARALEGAL & RIGHTS MANAGER Catherine Baxter



EDITOR'S NOTE

Go on, admit it. You only signed up to Instagram to follow beautiful women in the hope they will capture your heart. Look, it's fine, I get it. Whether it's a mid-workout selfie at the gym, cuddling a puppy, or a snap at the beach as they rock a bangin' bikini, there are many incredibly gorgeous ladies who have mastered the art of hashtags, filters, and making it big in this social

media-obsessed world where big breaks come to those with big followings. And the good news is that they are all about capturing your heart. The slightly bad news is that this heart is the kind you press when you "like" any of their photos.

This issue we feature some amazing Insta-up-and-comers (page 12) who are already making a major splash and posting their way to prominence. However, none more so than this month's cover girl, Mimi Elashiry. Once told she was too short for the modelling world, the 168cm, 20-year-old Australian glamour not only models but dances, designs, blogs, and, more importantly, is on the fast track to social-media supremacy. Before this issue went to print she had over 770,000 followers and counting. Check out her insanely-hot feature shoot on page 40, where she models her new swimwear range. When you're done why not feast your eyes on her Insta account (@mimiellashiry). I'm sure she'd love to capture your heart.

Cheers,
Santi
Editor-in-Chief

ASK THE GRILL TEAM



The trio from Triple M's Grill Team in Sydney – Gus Worland, Mark Geyer, and Matty Johns – answer a tough topic each month

THIS MONTH: WHO WILL WIN THE 2015 AFL & NRL GRAND FINALS?



GUS: It will be both my teams again, as it was a few years ago. The Hawthorn Hawks to win the flag but not as easy as many would think, as they'll most likely need to play a game outside Victoria. And the Sydney Roosters will win the NRL GF in a very tight contest.



MG: The Canterbury Bulldogs will win the NRL. They've come good at the right end of the season and you can never discount them. As far as the AFL Grand Final, it'll be hard to beat the Brisbane Heat or Harlem Globetrotters. Actually did GWS make the top eight?



Matty: The North Queensland Cowboys will win the NRL Grand Final. It's their time and they have the world's best player in Jonathan Thurston. In the AFL? Um... I like the Brisbane Roar or the Sydney Swifts. No? Oh OK, what do the Hockeyroos play again?



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SHAVE SHOP



A full-page photograph of a woman from the waist up, wearing a purple string bikini. She is standing on a beach with a white metal fence in the background. Her skin is wet and glistening with water droplets. She is holding a dark object, possibly a phone, in her right hand.

SPOTLIGHT

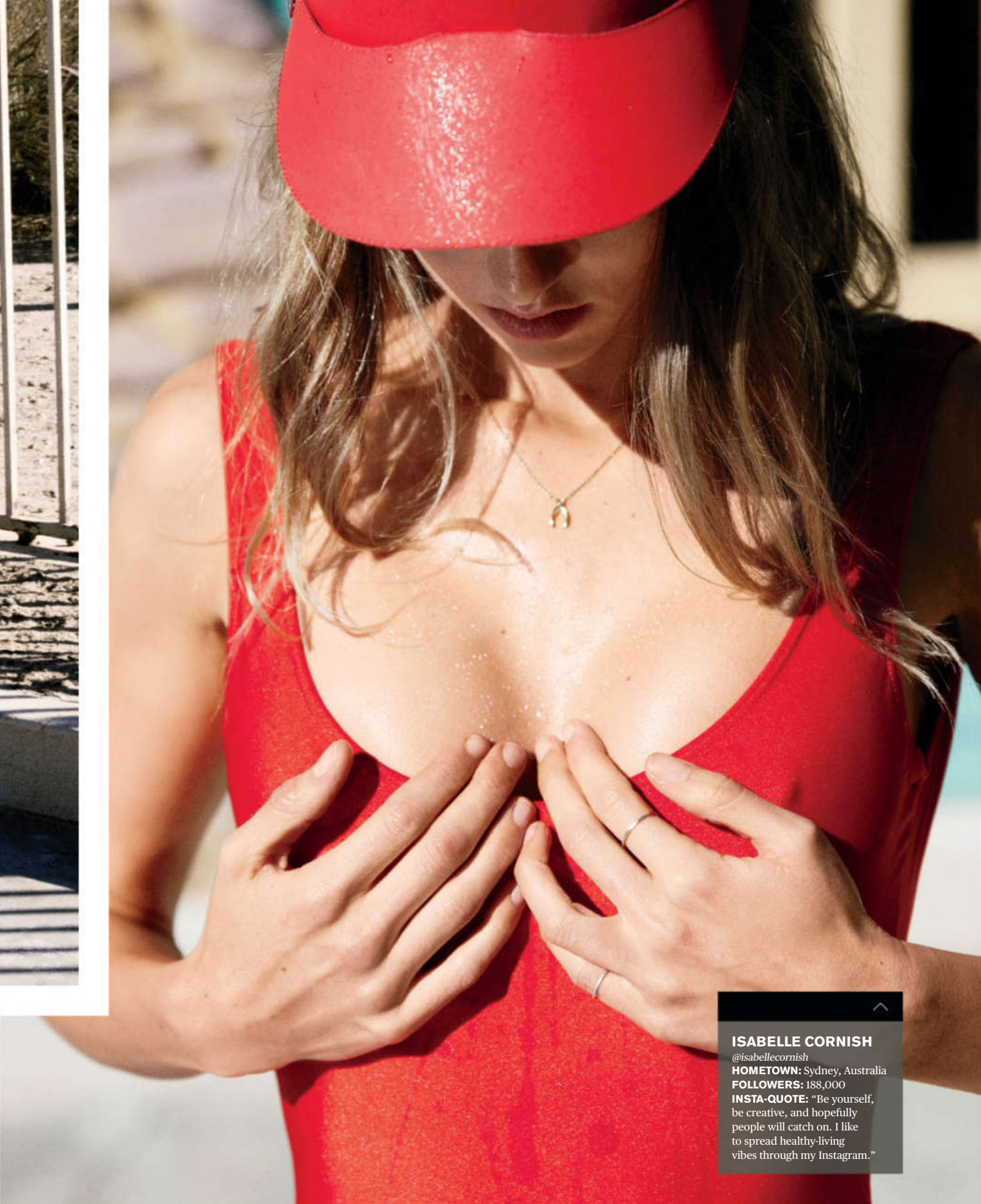
DIVE IN
WITH FOUR
INSTAGRAM
BEAUTIES
WHO ARE
ON THE FAST
TRACK TO
SOCIAL-MEDIA
SUPREMACY

THANKS FOR SHARING

MEET JULIA KELLY, KYRA SANTORO, MARA TEIGEN, AND ISABELLE CORNISH.

Whether rocking bikinis on the beach or pausing mid-workout at the gym to shoot another perfect selfie (iPhone held aloft in mirror), they're all about capturing hearts – the kind that appear when you “like” their photos on Instagram. And they are very, very good at amassing those likes, attracting and maintaining followers, and burnishing their personal brands.

It's not just that they're impossibly gorgeous; they're experts on which filters to use, how to hashtag, and when to post pictures. They optimise. They hustle. They've mastered the art of making it as a model in the Instagram-obsessed age of Kendall and Karlie, where social media reigns supreme and big breaks come to those with big followings. Which is why these four Insta-up-and-comers are already making a major splash and posting their way to prominence.



ISABELLE CORNISH

@isabellecornish

HOMETOWN: Sydney, Australia

FOLLOWERS: 188,000

INSTA-QUOTE: "Be yourself, be creative, and hopefully people will catch on. I like to spread healthy-living vibes through my Instagram."

KYRA SANTORO

@kyrasantorox

HOMETOWN:

Calabasas, California

FOLLOWERS: 636,000

INSTA-QUOTE:

"The best comment a guy can leave is something like 'great smile' or 'pretty eyes.'"

THIS PAGE:

ONE-PIECE, **COSABELLA**; NECKLACE AND RING, **SCOSHA**

OPPOSITE PAGE,

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

ON MARA: ONE-PIECE, **SOLID & STRIPED**; ON ISABELLE: ONE-PIECE, **SONIA BY SONIA RYKIEL**; PENDANT AND EARRINGS, **BAUBLEBAR**; ON KYRA: BIKINI, **SONIA BY SONIA RYKIEL**; NECKLACE, **SCOSHA**

PREVIOUS PAGE:

ONE-PIECE, **AMERICAN APPAREL**; VISOR, **LACOSTE**; PENDANT, **BAUBLEBAR**; RINGS, **SCOSHA**

MARA TEIGEN

@marateigen
(Buffalo Instababe)

HOMETOWN:

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

FOLLOWERS: 450,000

INSTA-QUOTE: "I use four
Instagram filters – Normal,
Slumber, Crema, and Ludwig.
Those are my faves."





THIS PAGE:
BIKINI,
ORLEBAR BROWN;
NECKLACE, **SCOSHA**

OPPOSITE PAGE:
BIKINI, **RACHEL PALLY;**
RING, **SCOSHA**



JULIA KELLY

@missjuliakelly

HOMETOWN:

Portland, Oregon, USA

FOLLOWERS: 1.3 million

INSTA-QUOTE: "I never use hashtags. I just don't like the way they look."

HAIR, **CLARK PHILLIPS**
AT **ARTMIX CREATIVE**
USING **ORIBE** AND **KIEHL'S**;
MAKE-UP, **SAMUEL PAUL**
AT **FORWARD ARTISTS**
USING **NARS**

SEE PAGE 40 FOR OUR COVER GIRL >

MIMI ELASHIRY

@mimielashiry

HOMETOWN: Sydney, Australia

FOLLOWERS: 770,000

INSTA-QUOTE: "I can share anything and everything that inspires me and that I'm passionate about."

HOW TO...

CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST





**“YOU NEED
TO SUCK UP
THE PAIN AND
HAVE A GOOD
WORK ETHIC
TO REACH
THE SUMMIT.”**

Opposite: **Ladder crossing
over a big crevasse;**
Left: **Standing on the Sth
Summit with the Hillary
step and summit behind**

Everest is a new movie inspired by the incredible real-life events surrounding eight climbers, from two different expeditions in 1996, and their fight for survival while trying to reach the summit of the world’s highest mountain. The star-studded cast includes Jake Gyllenhaal, Josh Brolin, Keira Knightley, Emily Watson and Sam Worthington (as mountaineer GUY COTTER). Guy, who was an advisor on the film, now runs the Adventure Consultants business leading expeditions to Everest. So, who better to explain taking on the “Head of the Sky”, as the Nepalese call, than this expert

BY **GUY COTTER**

STEP 1: THE PREPARATION PHASE

“An ascent of Mt. Everest usually becomes viable for a mountaineer after many years of climbing gradually higher peaks while they gain experience and learn how to look after themselves in the extreme high-altitude environment. Non-climbers would begin with a training course through a reputable mountain guiding company then join commercial expeditions to ascend gradually higher peaks across the globe. Everest is no place to be learning basics so that preparation phase is vital and besides, the other trips you do to develop experience and skills will be fun too. We’ve helped people transition from their first-ever climbing experience, followed by a program of dedicated training and expeditions, to see them reach the summit of Everest only 18 months after they started out.”

STEP 2: MONEY MATTERS

“Raising the necessary funds to embark on an Everest expedition can be a huge challenge for some people as you’ll pay around \$65,000 and have travel and equipment costs on top of that. Don’t allow yourself to be convinced by a cheap operator that you’ll be looked after just as well as you would with an ‘expensive’ operator. You get what you pay for on Everest and it is very common that people fail by going under-resourced because they went with a budget operator. Your life is too important to throw away to save a few bucks.”

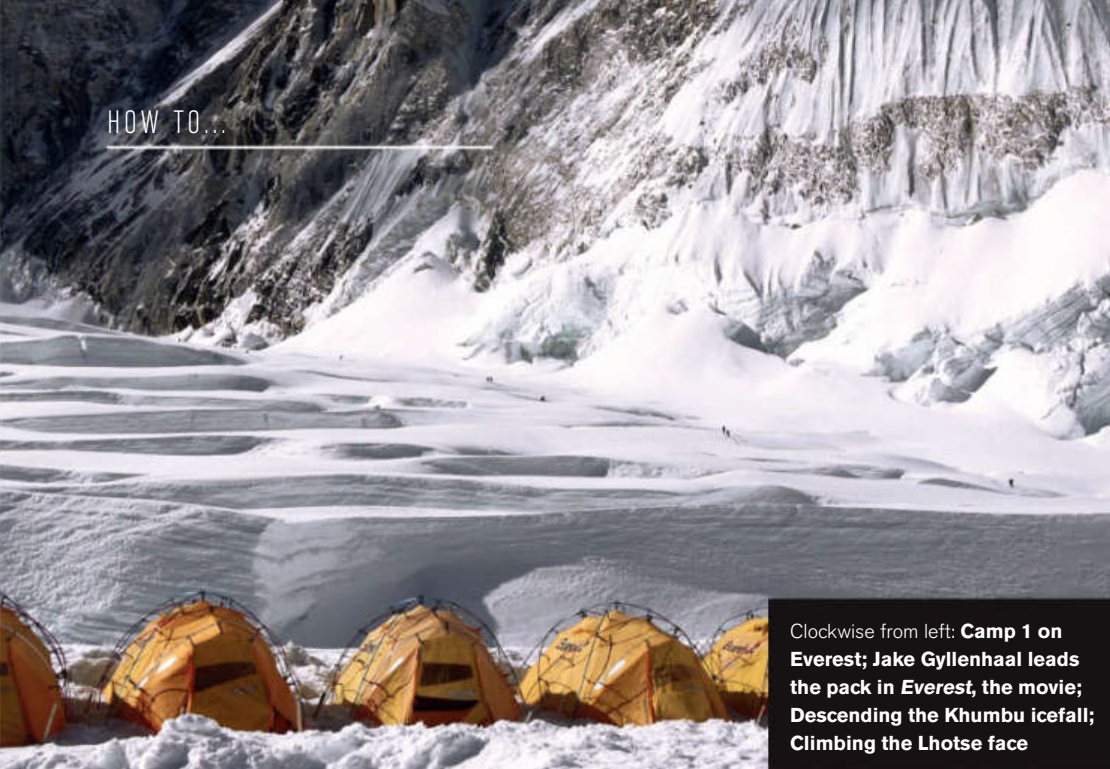
STEP 3: GEARING UP

“Most operators provide all but your personal gear so you will need to acquire specialist high altitude down jackets and pants, sleeping bags, mittens, a backpack and high

altitude climbing boots. Every climbing day you’ll be wearing your harness and you’ll have crampons on your boots. You will carry an ice axe and a climbing helmet and lots of warm gloves and hats. You’ll also pack a duffel with all the clothes and kit you’ll need for the two months duration of the expedition. So, throw in your iPod, some pictures of your loved ones, and a couple of books for those long nights in bed.”

STEP 4: OVERCOMING HURDLES

“Some of the biggest challenges are getting time away from work and home, the boredom of rest days, and the demands of the sheer physical output over an extended period. At high-altitudes food will taste unappetising so you lose the desire to eat and you are unable to sleep well because you are generally in a state of physical duress



Clockwise from left: **Camp 1 on Everest**; Jake Gyllenhaal leads the pack in *Everest*, the movie; Descending the Khumbu icefall; Climbing the Lhotse face



for extended periods. To be successful up here you need to suck up the pain and have a good work ethic to reach the summit. Surprisingly, it's not necessarily the honed athlete who summits Everest, but the person who doesn't rush and maintains themselves throughout the duration of the expedition. Mountaineering is more a thinking game of strategy that necessitates an elevated state of self-awareness. It's more about maintaining yourself over the duration of the 'campaign' than most people would realise. People who cannot resist the urge to push themselves hard every time they are climbing on the mountain tend to blow up and not make it to the top. There's one day that really counts

and that is summit day. Save yourself for this day, it really is worth it! The easiest part is going downhill after you have acclimatised to higher elevations. Every fibre in your body can be exhausted while you are going up but when you turn around to come down it seems to take no energy at all."

STEP 5: **MANAGING YOUR HEALTH**

"If you gain the appropriate experience prior to Everest you should be able to manage your health and avoid injury by being aware of the risks and how to avoid them. People new to high altitude climbing can be caught out when a small mishap can lead to a serious or even fatal outcome, so ensure you go with an operator that has qualified guides and a strong contingent of Nepalese high altitude workers. Because you spend a considerable amount of time there, you should ensure you have a comfortable base camp with high quality food and good medical support."

STEP 6: **THE BIG CLIMB**

"An ascent of Everest takes between eight to 10 weeks from your departure at Kathmandu until you return. First you must make the nine-day trek to base camp at 5,300m then recover for up to a week as your body adjusts to the thin atmosphere. It's from here you begin the actual climbing that begins with a 700m ascent through the notorious Khumbu icefall, a flow of tottering ice towers split by large crevasses that you cross on aluminium ladders. Once at Camp 1 you will rest up before going on to Camp 2 at 6,400m for a few days acclimatisation. People regularly suffer high altitude head aches and other

ailments as your body adjusts to having half the air pressure of sea level at this height so it takes considerably more effort to do anything than it would on a lower mountain. Before you can go higher you must return to base camp to rest a few days and eat reasonable-sized meals again. Rested up, you then climb back through Camps 1 and 2 to have your final acclimatisation 'overnight' at Camp 3 at 7,400m on the steep and icy Lhotse face. The following morning you descend back down the mountain again for another rest period in base camp and wait for a favourable weather forecast before making the final attempt for the summit."

STEP 7: **BEATING THE 'DEATH ZONE'**

"The next time up is the real deal, you ascend through the camps spending a night at each then make the climb up onto Sth Col, site of the highest camp and point where climbers use bottled oxygen. At just a hair under 8,000m this is known as the death zone, stay here more than a couple of days without the life sustaining gas and your body starves of oxygen and you die. The summit day begins late at night so you can arrive at the summit soon after dawn. As the sun rises you see the world begin to take shape as the world's highest mountains appear well below you and the curvature of the earth is apparent in the distance. All the hard work and risks you take seem worth it when you are privileged to experience these outstanding views and as you take the final steps onto the summit you cannot help but feel completely elated." ■

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CATCH A MILLION-DOLLAR FISH

BY MATTHEW HAYDEN

THIS MONTH, 76 ICONIC NORTHERN TERRITORY BARRAMUNDI WILL BE EXPERTLY TAGGED AND RELEASED THROUGHOUT TOP END WATERS, HOME OF THE BEST BARRAMUNDI HABITAT IN AUSTRALIA. ONE OF THE BARRA WILL BEAR A \$1 MILLION PRIZE TAG, WHILE THE REMAINING 75 WILL NET THEIR CATCHERS \$10,000 EACH. WE ASK FORMER AUSSIE CRICKET GREAT, AND FISHING AFICIONADO, MATTHEW HAYDEN FOR HIS TOP FIVE TIPS TO LANDING THE ELUSIVE MILLION DOLLAR FISH



1. During the build-up season in October, hit the inland waterways and billabongs for freshwater barra as they warm up there ahead of monsoon season. Barra are lazy opportunistic feeders, heat, along with tidal movement, are a couple of the key triggers for these piscatorial treasures. Tidal movement allows the opportunity for the barramundi to ambush their prey which are otherwise distracted in dealing with water movement.

2. When monsoon hits around January, places like Darwin Harbour are barra hotspots where you'll find them hiding amongst the mangrove creeks and estuaries. A saying I like to use is, "Never drive over fish to get to fish." So many times in fishing it is easy to get caught up in the temptation to keep travelling further and further away. A resourceful fisherman will always catch fish. Right in Darwin's Hub there are and abundance of spots which barramundi will take cover in ready to smash bypassing baitfish or hopefully your lure! As fresh water spills out of river systems check for things like different water colour lines, back eddies, rock bars, and, my favourite, any street lamp that has enough strength to cast a

shadow in the water and create an artificial ecosystem. Barra will always be tempted to sit in and around these feeding zones.

3. Take a few weedless lures on your trip as some parts of estuaries are full of roots and hidden obstacles which can make your day not about fishing, but retrieving expensive lures. There's no question that soft plastics have transformed the light tackle recreational fishing industry. Presented well they are deadly and definitely increase your chance of catching a fish. A variety which I find particular useful are those which can be rigged in a way which keep the lure relatively snag free - this is particularly useful during the wet when water levels are abnormally high. There are too many brands of these to invest in to mention but as a general rule I like to use dark lures on dark days and bright lures on bright days.

4. Switch to noisy surface poppers or troll along a moonlit patch of lilies to attract the barra to the surface. There can be no better fun than using lures which enable you to see the bite. The rush of seeing a fish explode to life with underwater fantasy and start to court a presented lure is so exciting but not for the faint hearted; as to hold your nerve long enough to let a big barramundi consume your lure is an art unto itself.

5. Engage a local 'fisho' to take you out because not only can they provide all the fishing equipment you need, they also hold all of the local knowledge. They know the best places to fish in the Top End and the best time to go hunting for that big barra! When I was up in Darwin last month, I had a great day out charter fishing with Barefoot Fishing Safaris, who gave me some great tips on fishing. ■

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OUT SEPTEMBER 23 AT **JB HI-FI**

Tesla Model M

BY **BILL VARETIMIDIS**

The gas vs electricity machine war just got even more interesting! The American owned Tesla company, known for building high profile cars (including one electric roadster) since 2010 is now poised to enter the two-wheeled arena. Sharing its name with the leader of James Bond's MI6, the Model M from Tesla is the creation of London designer Jans Slapins, whose catalogue includes the recent stylings of the Lamborghini Rat Rod and BMW Urban Racer. Visually, it appeals to the fans of old skool sport touring bikes like the Munch Mammoth. Even if you're unfamiliar with that famous machine, the name itself tells you all you need to know

Onboard, the 150kW electric motor comes with four different operating modes: Race, Cruise, Standard, and Eco. Impressively, torque can be produced at 0 RPM which makes it more instant than a pack of 2-minute Noodles; which means acceleration is bloody brutal. We know what you're thinking – the bike looks heavy. But this two-wheeled version of the P85D sedan uses heftiness to its advantage, mounting the electric motor and lithium-ion batteries low within the frame to keep the centre of gravity down, and the handling top notch. Just don't go looking for the transmission, we don't like your chances. You know, because it's electric.





The Extra Terrestrial (ETV) Concept

Right now, the closest vehicles we have to challenge any alien dragsters (should they visit) is the Ferrari 458, the Lamborghini Veneno, or the Pagani Zonda. But there may be another option... Michael Vetter from car customisers The Car Factory is so bummed out by modern car design, he put his carbon fibre where his mouth is and designed and built the Extra Terrestrial Vehicle (ETV) as a service to mankind. Sitting on a Chevrolet Aveo platform, it uses a supercharged 2.0 litre four cylinder petrol engine which sends power to the front wheels via a five-speed gearbox – 201kW to be precise, for those keeping score. So far, so standard. It's when you get to the body that things get a little...spacey. The ETV features a five-foot high windscreen, gullwing doors operated via a remote control and a body shape/shell that can only be described as computer mousey. Instead of a rear window or side views, monitors display the view from three on-board cameras. Very Big Brother-ish... It is actually registered road-worthy (in the U.S.), so owners don't need to turn their garage into a museum, and it can be yours to own for a bargain \$US89,000. Just check your bank balance – and the latest alien exchange rate!



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shift dual clutch
POWER
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TORQUE
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TOP SPEED
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0-100KM/H
2.8 seconds

PRICE
\$3.1 million (est)



2016 Ferrari FXX K

Ferrari's XX line of road-legal tracksters from the '70s were cute, the Enzo-based track monster FXX from 10 years ago was fun – but today's LaFerrari-based FXX K is not only the next in line, but is also the most mind-numbing Ferrari known to roads since the F40. How mind-numbing you ask? How about an aerodynamic efficiency of 2.84 compared to a Formula 1 car's 3 and 1200 pounds of downforce at 200 km/h. 'Nuff said. It's those aerodynamics that control the mid-mounted V12 engine and its electric KERS booster (the K in the name), and with upgrades that dwarf the LaFerrari, total strength is 1036 horsepower (V12 = 848 hp; electric motor = 188 hp), knocking out its main rival, the McLaren P1 GTR (986 hp; 735kW). With its aggressive front/rear and unique LED headlamps, this XX has a look all to itself – making the FXX and the 599 variant look like leftover char from last Sunday's BBQ. As expected, Ferrari revoked all luxury interior features and replaced them with race-spec tech like unique switches for the KERS and the launch system. Good thing too as the heated seats would have been useless at ballistic speeds anyway. Forty examples are to be built and are already taken. Shame we were too slow... and too poor.



THE STOWAWAYS

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OF GETAWAY
VEHICLES CAN
BE COLLAPSED,
ORIGAMI-STYLE,
FOR EASY
TRANSPORT.
YOU JUST HAVE
TO KNOW WHEN
TO FOLD 'EM...

BY **MATT BERICAL**



Sea

Made from a single sheet of pre-creased, corrugated polypropylene, the 365cm-long, 25-inch-wide **Oru Bay+** kayak breaks down into a 13-kilogram, portfolio-style case that's small enough to sling over a shoulder, stow behind a couch, or check on a plane. The single-passenger vessel takes about 20 minutes to assemble and is as nimble on the water as its more unwieldy, noncollapsible counterparts. And despite its take-anywhere design, the Bay+ is equipped with an adjustable bucket seat, strap-down deck rigging, and waterproof deck hatch, making it suitable for even the most intrepid multiday tours.

US\$1,575; orukayak.com

Air

First class feeling a bit too cramped? Then pilot the **Icon A5**, an amphibious light aircraft that can be hitched to a car and take off from just about anywhere.

Articulating wings fold flat to make the carbon-fiber personal plane simple to store or schlep, and it requires only a sport-pilot license to operate. The A5's 100-hp engine is good for 563 kilometres per tank and runs on regular unleaded; it can set down on both land and water, and its interior has a simple-to-decipher instrument cluster and controls. Originally conceived in 2006, the A5 is slated to start shipping to customers later this month. That should be enough time to clear out the garage.

From US\$189,000;

iconaircraft.com



Land

Able to transform from an easy-to-carry, 48-by-80-centimetre package into a lithe commute conqueror in less than 10 seconds, the 27-speed **Tern Verge S27h** is crammed with a suite of seldom-seen, ride-enhancing extras, such as a high-efficiency dynamo hub that transfers pedal strokes into device-charging energy and a bike seat that doubles as a tire pump.

US\$1,900; ternbicycles.com

THE NEW HEAD TRIP

VIRTUAL-REALITY TRAVEL MAY JUST
REVOLUTIONISE TOURISM — WHILE
TURNING US ALL INTO SHUT-INS

BY KYLE CHAYKA

“YOU MIGHT WANT TO SIT DOWN,” Mike Woods tells me.

I recline in an office chair, and a moment later, after whizzing through a space-time tunnel that looks like a tornado made of pure light, I find myself standing on a beach in Hawaii. The colours are vivid and rich, the sunlight dappled. The sound of waves echoes in my ears, palms sway in the wind, and the wide ocean sparkles to the horizon. I am alone.

I feel an immediate sense of calm. It's uncanny, but I would swear my skin is growing warm in the sunlight and a faint breeze is carrying a mist off the water. My heartbeat begins to slow. But as I crane my neck to check the trees for coconuts, the landscape becomes pixelated. It's kind of like being on spring break in *World of Warcraft*.

I'm immersed in a virtual-reality experience, aptly called the *Teleporter*, created by the British digital media studio Framestore. The Hawaiian expedition, along with a virtual journey to the top of a London skyscraper, was designed for Marriott Hotels as a way for its guests to experience the future of travel. Woods, the founder of Framestore's digital department, helps me off with my headset, an Oculus VR Rift. It's then that I realise the ocean spray was actually just beads of sweat that collected on my forehead around the edges of the bulky goggles.



"It's as close as you can get to a real-life experience," Woods tells me. All those former travel agents who lost their jobs because of the digital revolution haven't seen anything yet. VR companies are working feverishly to enable would-be adventurers to travel the globe from the comfort of their own futons. Want to scale a digital replica of the Great Wall of China? Paddle down the Amazon? Just "jack in," as Ralph Fiennes put it in *Strange Days*. "People in the next few years will have a separate room in their house that's just full of stuff like this," Woods claims. "If you want to go and hang out at the top of the Eiffel Tower or go to a mountain in Iceland, you can."

It will be cheap, safe, and completely hassle-free. "Think of all the trauma involved in travel: the fossil fuels it spends, the germs you get on a plane, the money it costs, the amount of time it takes," says Jeremy Bailenson, the founding director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab. "VR allows you to travel when you want to, not when you have to." Forget TSA patdowns, jet lag, lost luggage, bewildering menus, lumpy mattresses, and predatory locals, all of which make actual travel such a drag. The Oculus Rift never runs out of space in the overhead bins.

This is how tech people tend to talk – with total confidence that every new tool is going to radically change everything. Remember life before the Segway forever changed transportation, or TaskRabbit forever changed commerce? Exactly. And yet research suggests that virtual travel does offer some of the salutary mental effects of the real thing. A recent study conducted by the University of Melbourne found that 40-second-long "microbreaks" spent viewing a virtual simulation of nature increased workers' ability to focus on the tasks at hand. The suits in HR are already asking themselves: Do people even need vacation days?

BY NOW WE'RE ALL familiar with Oculus Rift. In 2012, 19-year-old Palmer Luckey, who was working at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies, developed a cheap VR helmet that attracted the interest of his professors. He then launched a Kickstarter and raised more than US\$2.4 million. Last year, after delivering early models, Luckey sold the company to Facebook for US\$2 billion. Meanwhile, numerous other VR companies are racing ahead with similar technology, as tech bloggers and other early users rave about the experience.

Scott Broock is the vice president of content at Jaunt, a San Francisco-area VR company. When I meet Broock in a West Village bar, he's dressed in the soft blazer, crisp checked shirt, and designer glasses of a Hollywood exec. Broock puts an Oculus Rift on my head and suddenly I'm standing in a grungy alleyway covered in graffiti. An alien zooms into my field of vision and starts deejaying on a pair of intergalactic turntables.

A great VR experience "lets you feel like you've escaped," Broock tells me.

Marriott is considering incorporating VR into its hotel rooms, the better to advertise its other properties and let guests "sample destinations before they go," says Michael Dail, the company's VP of marketing. "We're rethinking in-room entertainment."

It would be like movie trailers, but for destinations. Before you go outside to see San Francisco in the flesh, first take a

**"IF YOU WANT TO
GO AND HANG
OUT AT THE TOP
OF THE EIFFEL
TOWER OR GO
TO A MOUNTAIN
IN ICELAND,
YOU CAN."**



peek at what you could be doing in Istanbul! But would it increase sales? Here's what no doubt would: Hoteliers could pump adult pay-per-view into the Oculus. Guests would never go home.

AS FOR THE PROSPECT of virtual travel, my whirlwind tour of pixelated destinations leaves me pining for the glorious inconvenience of a delayed flight or a malfunctioning hotel thermostat. No matter how seamless the 3-D scanning, a virtual vacation will never manage to replicate the greatest thing about going somewhere: serendipity.

On a virtual vacation, every step is bitmapped. The programmer is your tour guide, and you can never stray from the group. "You can't say you discovered this tiny little restaurant, met these amazing people on the street, or saw an impromptu concert," says Sean Murphy, the editor-in-chief of *Jetsetter*, a travel Web site. For all its bells and whistles, VR is more like a postcard than a journey. It flattens what should be a multisensory voyage into a shallow facsimile thereof: a nifty development for marketers but hardly the Holodeck from *Star Trek*. "I don't see it as a replacement; I see it as a way to inspire people to travel more," says Albert "Skip" Rizzo, a psychologist who launched a VR lab at USC in 1996. "People are always going to go in the flesh. You don't have the feel of the sand, the sun shining on you, all those tactile senses." But companies will sure try: They're already hard at work on making VR more tactile. Marriott's *Teleporter* originally simulated ocean mist with a spray bottle.

The best VR trip on my grand tour takes place at Specular, an underground studio in Brooklyn, where I visit "Exquisite City," a surreal version of Belgrade that mixes 3-D scans of the actual place with elements that conjure a drugged-out Minecraft mod. When James George, the co-creator of the piece, fits the Oculus over my head, I find myself in a nighttime urban landscape where stars shine like pixels in the dark sky above me. Or is it the other way around and the pixels are stars?

Navigating the terrain with the help of a keyboard, I come across buildings made entirely of ATMs, a skyscraper tower built from freestanding stairs, and trees growing upside down. "You're an anthropologist on an alien planet," George tells me. The experience is deeply unsettling, but I can't get enough of it. The whole notion that VR travel should mimic the real thing suddenly seems mistaken. The unknowns are what make travel great. It's not standing in front of the Eiffel Tower and taking a snapshot – it's chatting up a hot art student who invites you to a house party in a sketchy arrondissement and waking up wondering what happened to your pants. The further away you get from your own everyday reality, the easier it is to feel like you've really gone somewhere and found a piece of yourself you never knew.

So if you're one of those early adopters who can't wait to lie on a virtual beach, go right ahead. It just means more space on the sand for those of us who prefer the real thing. ■

Reality Check

THE OCULUS RIFT ISN'T THE ONLY HEADSET ON THE HORIZON HOPING TO TAKE USERS TO AN ALL-NEW REALITY. HERE'S A QUICK LOOK AT THE OTHER TOP CONTENDERS

BY CHRIS STEAD



PROJECT MORPHEUS

Developed by tech powerhouse Sony for use with its PlayStation 4 console, Project Morpheus took the recent Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles by storm. Surprisingly comfortable and with a super-fast 120MHz refresh rate that reduces motion-sickness concerns, the Project Morpheus' concept for travel is immersing you deeper into a gaming world than you've ever been before. Responsive head-tracking, stereoscopic 3D and excellent in-built audio add to the thrill, while the device can also output back to a TV so others can see what the player is viewing. We played a horror demo called *Kitchen* and it almost gave us a heart attack, such is the sense of being in that reality. Over 40 games are already in the works for the device.

ETA: **First Half of 2016**

HTC VIVE

This unusual partnership between mobile giant HTC and video game developer and distributor Valve came out of nowhere and is set to jump in ahead of all its competitors with a release this year. The headset brings a wireless experience, which can operate in a 15x15-foot square in front of its partnered base station. It houses 70 sensors, includes gyroscope and accelerometer support, and by featuring two 1080 x 1200 screens, it offers the best resolution of the current contenders. Epic Games, who make the mighty *Unreal Engine 4* platform powering plenty of next-generation gaming experiences, is supporting the device and building the code into its middleware, which should ensure good software support.

ETA: **November, 2015**



MICROSOFT HOLOLENS

Halfway between our reality and the virtual existence, is an augmented one.

Microsoft is developing a visor-like headset called the HoloLens that projects the virtual world into the real one, allowing you to not only see both, but interact with them simultaneously. While some very impressive tech demos have been shared with us relating to its use in gaming (think PC and Xbox One), its enhancements of every day activities are equally as exciting. Being able to project cooking instructions onto the wall while you bake something tasty, or offer a video feed tutorial while you fix your car, are just some of the examples of how this tech can be used. Alas, the demo model we tried was uncomfortable and took time to set up, suggesting it will not be with us for quite a while.

ETA: **Late 2016**





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IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS SHE HAS RIDDEN 86 WINS, WITH THESE HORSES EARNING MORE THAN \$3.4 MILLION



THE STATS

(AS OF AUGUST 2015)

NAME

Winona Costin

BORN

November 2, 1994

HEIGHT

152cm

WEIGHT

50kg

TRAINERS

Peter and Paul Snowden

CAREER RIDES

1926

WINS

196 wins (with 188 seconds and 171 thirds).

TWITTER

@costin_winona

Interview by SANTI PINTADO

CHAMPION APPRENTICE WINONA COSTIN recently became only the second female jockey, since Kathy O'Hara 10 years ago, to win the apprentice crown. So, it's no surprise that the 20-year-old Sydneysider is in high demand and one to definitely watch during the Spring Racing Carnival kicking off this month



Above: **Winona receives the Theo Green award for Sydney's champion apprentice jockey** (photo by Terence Ho); Left: **Winona gives us the thumbs up** (by Steve Hart); Opposite: **Riding Bouzy Rouge to victory at Wyong** (by Steve Hart)

How did you become a jockey, Winona? My father, auntie, and great grandfather were all jockeys, and my mother was a track work rider, so racing was in my blood. I was destined to do something within the industry. My great grandfather was actually a champion jockey in New Zealand.

Describe a normal day for you.

I get up around 3:00a.m. every morning – I live at the stables so I just leave my room and I am right there. I saddle up my first horse for the morning and ride down to the track where I will work eight to nine horses. I return home between 8.15a.m. and 9.00a.m. then have breakfast and a short rest. After this I get ready to go to the races. I have race meetings four to five days per week and on the days there are no meetings there are usually barrier trials. When I return home from the races I try to relax and have some dinner.

What's your fitness regime like?

Arm and leg strength is very important to jockeys. My trainer

Peter Snowden says I have good strength in my shoulders, arms and thighs and riding every day helps to keep my muscles in good order. I don't go to the gym as I find the work I do around the stable, along with riding, keeps me strong and my weight where it should be. So, at this stage of my career, I really do not have a rigid fitness regime.

What's the biggest misconception about jockeys?

One is it appears to be a very cool job loaded with glamour and rewards. The rewards and glamour are there but the truth it is that it can be a very unstable, uncertain, and a dangerous career.

What is it like being a female in such a male-dominated sport?

Female jockeys are pretty much treated the same as the men today. Some people may think we are not as strong, and that may well be the case, but some horses will run better for a female jockey than a male, so it's all a balance as to selecting the right rider for the horse.

Do male jockeys ever give you a hard time?

No they are really good.

Describe the mental strength needed to be a jockey.

There are many ups and downs in racing and it is important to focus on each ride as it comes up. You need to do the very best for the owners and trainers of each horse you ride. You have to be committed, show resilience and perform under pressure. I'm very lucky I have great support from Peter and Paul Snowden.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

The Mona Lisa Stakes (Listed Race) at Wyong on Bouzy Rouge.

Is there a better feeling than winning a race?

You never get tired of that winning feeling. It is a feeling that is terribly hard to explain when you win a race the adrenalin is flowing and you are on top of the world. As a jockey you work strange hours and it is more a lifestyle than a job, you live and breathe horses.

What's been the worst injury you've had?

I have been very lucky thus far in that my setbacks have been few and far between. Earlier this year at the Wellington Boot meeting I had a serious fall where I was rendered unconscious and I was out of action for two weeks.

Ouch. If you weren't a jockey what would you be doing?

I don't think there is anything else I would want to do. When I was in my first Group One race my dad told me, "Don't be nervous as this is what you have always wanted to do." He is right as I can't see myself doing anything else. I have always been single minded in the career path I wanted to take but if I really had to do something else it would be working with animals.

Where do you hope to be in the next five years?

I would like to be ranked in the top five jockeys in Sydney. ■

A black and white close-up portrait of Pierce Brosnan. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious, contemplative expression. His hair is dark and neatly styled. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a dark tie. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his face and the texture of his skin.

"I HAVE A
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OF ADMIRATION
FOR DANIEL
[CRAIG] DOING
SUCH A MAJESTIC
JOB OF MAKING
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BOLD AND ALIVE.
ONCE A BOND,
ALWAYS A BOND."

PIERCE BROSNAN

WHETHER HE'S BATTLING CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS AS JAMES '007' BOND, OUTWITTING AUTHORITIES AS THOMAS CROWN, OR GOING DARK IN *THE NOVEMBER MAN*, THE IRISH LEADING MAN HAS PERSONIFIED BIG-SCREEN COOL LIKE FEW ACTORS IN HISTORY

You're in Hawaii? That must be nice! Yeah, I'm sitting here with my family – my wife and my sons. I'm nursing a beer on the north shore of Kauai, where we live.

I feel like one of those Secret Service officers who interrupt your island retirement because the world needs you one last time.

No, it's OK! I love *MAXIM*, actually. It's very cool. I see my note for today – "ICON interview" – and I think, shit, icon? How the hell did that happen?

Let's start at the beginning: You grew up poor in Ireland but became an emblem of sophistication. Now how the hell did that happen?

A man becomes what he dreams. And I dreamed of being in the movies. I was brought up on Steve McQueen, Clint Eastwood, Warren Beatty, and Cary Grant. Being some country lad from the banks of the River Boyne, I never wanted to be wealthy. I was driven by artistic intention.

Some stars come from acting royalty, but you didn't. Your father split when you were young and your mum was a nurse. Was that part of the motivation?

Acting – well, when you have nothing and you find something like that, you have the world. When I found acting, I found a sanctuary; I found a home for myself. It made me work hard because I had nothing else in the back pocket going for me. I cleaved my way in there for years: street theatre and kids theatre. I trained. At 61 years of age, it's what I do. I love making movies.

When colleagues talk about you, they also describe your professionalism. Do you take pride in that?

Acting is a hard f—king game. It's psychological warfare out there. My old teacher taught me that, as trivial as it may seem to the outside world, it's always a life-and-death situation as soon as you set foot on the stage. So you'd better bring heart and soul to the work to somehow turn people on and enthrall them. And you want to be with cool people who will also enthrall you! I worked with William Hurt [in *The Moon and the Sun*]. I love the dude. The better the actor you're working with, the better you'll be.

You've worked with Hurt, Geoffrey Rush, and Ewan McGregor – just to name a few. Who's pushed you hardest?

Well, the men you mentioned, for sure. Greg Kinnear in *The Matador* – and there's a list of women who are so beautiful and beguiling. Judi Dench, and, I mean, just being dazzled by Meryl Streep most of my life

and then to do *Mamma Mia!* – it was easy to fall in love with her. The good ones are really human and have a sense of who they are. They make you real, the good ones do.

You made your name with *Remington Steele*, but James Bond took you to another level.

Of course, the ghost of Bond will follow me forever. In many respects, that is the gift that keeps giving, and one can only look at it with gratitude and a great sense of humour and pride. I stood on the stage alongside Sean Connery and Roger Moore and the lads. I like playing in that part of the arena.

What about Thomas Crown? He was another iconic hero. Do you think you'll ever do another *Thomas Crown* movie?

I think *Thomas Crown* could still work, but the clock is ticking somewhat. We've gone through a couple of scripts and never really hit the mark of our expectations. But maybe we could find another Thomas Crown out there and pull it off.

Movies about spies and assassins and such have changed over the years. How would you describe that shift from *Remington Steele* to Bond to something like *The November Man*?

When I was doing my first press conference for James Bond, which was an absolute baptism by fire. One of the first questions they asked was, "Do we really need another spy? Is the world of espionage real?" And, of course, it's very real because countries have secrets, and the subterfuge of our politicians and the dissembling by various countries is very much in evidence to this day. So, that kind of character.

We were discussing espionage and how in this day and age it's an area that seems more important than ever.

Right. There's a fascination with that, and it makes governments pretty nervous. But they control us; they've got us by the short and curlies now. They know where to find you and how to control the masses through agitation and confusion. The media has us in its crosshairs, and the entertainment world has a hand in this as well.

Well, when you put it like that, it all sounds pretty bleak.

Listen, there will be more terrible things happening to our young people before there's less of it, because of the shaming that goes on online and on reality television, whether it's about being overweight or whatever else. It's not healthy. It's a harsher world now.

Which bring us to... *Mrs. Doubtfire*. Robin Williams beats you up pretty bad. Was it traumatic being beaten up by a man in a dress?

No! Extremely humorous. I am still proud of it. The choking sequence

around that table went on for at least three days. They had to dismiss the children because of the joyous, humorous filth that came out of Robin's mouth. I could hardly get through the takes.

Since James Bond, it seems like you've worked hard against the smooth grain of that Bond image and actually gone after darker parts.

I came to America and got very lucky with *Remington Steele*, and I got branded with this image of being sophisticated and suave: Mr. Pretty Boy, Mr. Handsome. So you find yourself painted into a corner. It's great, but you have to do something different. When I came into the world of Bond, the blood was never real, and I was caught between the world of Sean Connery and Roger Moore. So within that decade I created my own production company, Irish Dream Time, and then did *The Tailor of Panama*. I was always trying to push against the restraints.

Do you see a common thread between *The November Man*, *The Matador*, *The Tailor of Panama*, and *The Ghost Writer*?

There's definitely a ribbon of truth in the continuity of performance within the four films. They are dangerous, bleak, lonely characters. They're mangled by life and their own kind of self-doubts and anger. And that appeals to me.

In *The November Man*, the role seems particularly gruff and tough. Was it fun to shake off the suave charm?

The intention was to create a character that was vicious and dangerous once you opened the box and let him out: to show the other side of the coin and to do something I didn't get to do in the Bond movies. We always wanted to make it gritty, down and dirty. Make him vicious, make him lethal, and give it as much grit as possible without getting totally gratuitous. But the movie had been close to my heart for five years.

You seem to be busier than ever. What motivates you?

Seven films in two years was definitely not planned, but that was just the way the cards fell. I'm just driven by the love of it, and that I can f—king do it.

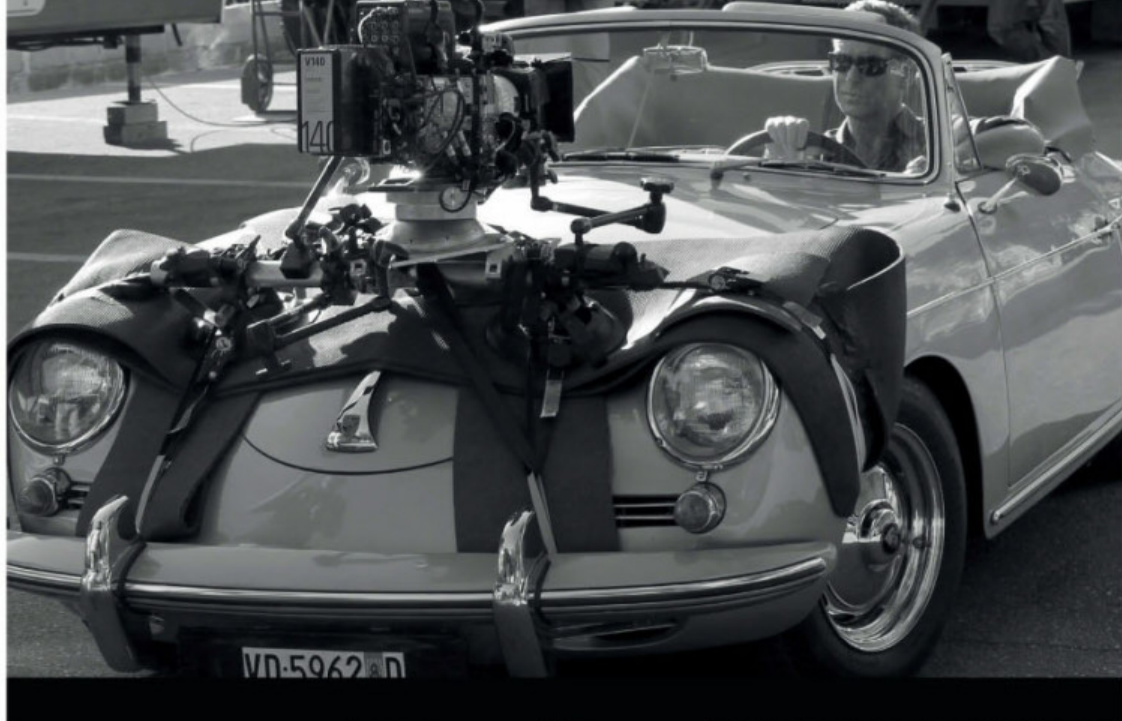
What are your passions now?

Acting, along with painting and looking after my family. I have four sons who are all filmmakers and actors in the making. And I have great mates. Still, I was standing here the other day with Mr. Graham Nash, and he said to me, "Have they found you out yet?" I said, "No, I don't think they have. Or maybe they have but just haven't told me."

Do you think about your legacy?

Yeah, sure. At 62 years of age, if not now, when? You can look at yourself as a young man or an old man – in the many different periods of manhood – but you always have to temper it with gratitude.

You are one of the few actors brave enough to say, "I like sex scenes." You also once said, "Bond was supposed to be this great lover, but I always found the love scenes in those movies a little



Clockwise from top left: On the set of *The November Man* in Perast, Montenegro; About to break into song in *Mamma Mia!*; Getting his James Bond groove-on with Sophie Marceau in *The World Is Not Enough*


dull." So, what actually does make a good sex scene?

Sex scenes are very tricky to do. I shouldn't say this too loudly – my wife is nearby. Thank God for my darling wife. She allows me to run off into the wild and do what I do. Anyway, *The Thomas Crown Affair* has a good sex scene [with Rene Russo]. You know, they make a little bit nice and then

they end up sliding all over the floor and up the stairs. On the page, it just said, "They make love." You know, it's like *Ben-Hur*: "Chariot race."

You were talking about one of your co-stars Olga Kurylenko, a former Bond girl, and you said, "She started with Daniel Craig, and she's going to end up with Brosnan."

There's a great sense of fun among us. Olga just gets deeper and richer. I have a real sense of admiration for Daniel doing such a majestic job of making Bond so big and bold and alive. Once a Bond, always a Bond. ■



NEW JAMES BOND COLLECTION

Featuring all 23 iconic Bond films together in one collection (including a 24th space for *SPECTRE* which hits movie theatres on November 6), this special edition collectible box-set (with all-new special features) is out on Blu-ray and DVD this month.

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PREVIOUS PAGE: **BOHO PRINCESS** TOP, \$49;
BOHO PRINCESS CHEEKY BOTTOM, \$39
THIS PAGE:
PIECES OF ME ONE-PIECE, \$120

H

Hey Mimi, congrats on your first-ever MAXIM cover.
Thank you, I feel very excited. I've only ever appeared in MAXIM in bits and pieces so it's great to be featured in a bigger way! I'm also pretty stoked to have my swimwear range recognised amongst different audiences.

Yes, you're posing in some of your Cheeky Swim outfits here. How did the range come about?

Well, I've been working with Glue Store for a while now. Between social media, campaigns, collaborations, and events, I've been lucky enough to have taken such a big part and be involved closely with such a well recognised brand. When you love your job you'll never work a day in your life – it's like having good times and fun with friends.

How involved were you in the look and feel of Cheeky Swim?

I designed the entire range with the help of the Glue Store buying and marketing team – there were some outrageous designs. I'd already thought about designing swimwear a year ago, so I found my old sketch book and started to combine new and old ideas, gather inspiration from Pinterest, and then threw together a mood board of materials, patterns, shapes, colours and moods for the range.

Ever had a wardrobe malfunction in your swimwear?

Yes! I wore a crocheted one-piece, with no lining, to a pool party in Las Vegas and towards the end of the day the crotch split open. So, I proceeded to wear my skirt in the pool for the rest of the event.

What do you do when you're not posing for MAXIM?

I live in Byron Bay and workout on the beach every morning, buy vegies from the farmer's markets, making all my own food, cruise around op shops listening to the new Dr. Dre album or Mick Jenkins, and take many photos of friends on my old-school film cameras.

Tell us more about yourself.

Long story short, my mum is sixth generation Australian/Irish and my dad is Egyptian. I was born in Murwillumbah, just north of Byron Bay, and grew up in Sydney's eastern suburbs. I've been a dancer since I was six and it's the greatest passion in my life. In the 14 years of dancing six days a week, I was lucky enough to receive a dance scholarship to Reddam House, where my love of dancing was nurtured all through high school and in 2011 I was accepted into the Joffrey Ballet school in New York but deferred to finish my HSC [Higher School Certificate].

How'd you get into modelling?

I used to love throwing myself from ridiculous heights and injured my back at Schoolies in Byron, jumping off the 22-metre jump at the Island Quarry. I could no longer dance so started to fill my time with blogging and modelling and now here I am.

Tell us about being rejected by the agencies in Australia.

I've been modelling since I was a baby and all my life everyone kept saying, "When you grow up you should be a model." But when I'd go to agencies they'd all

"I'M REALLY AT
MY HAPPIEST
WHEN I'M
SALTY AND
BASKING IN
THE SUN."

say, "You're beautiful but..." It was very frustrating. My height was clearly not going to change but the world is changing, as a result of social media, and you don't have to be a six-beauty to have success.

What's your favourite thing about social media?

I can share anything and everything that inspires me and that I'm passionate about, or even just things that make me laugh – like the hilarious photo I uploaded of my dog looking very stoned. To be able to share this with a passionate and engaging audience means I can help people whether it be from a perspective of marketing or friends who I feel are doing something special, creating brands or charity work. I just want to use the numbers I have to help other people and one day give back to this earth and all my fans, who I love, and thank so much.

Is there anything you dislike about it?

Well, it can be a full-time job just keeping up with everything. Social media is amazing and encourages individuality allowing people to be their own brand but it can consume some. For me, my life is my life and nothing will change this – I just love to share it with my audience. The number on my page doesn't rule me and I don't have a facade.

What's the naughtiest thing you've ever uploaded on Instagram?

I don't upload "naughty photos" but I guess the cheekiest thing was an amazing photo, by Harper Smith, of me running around butt-naked with her Donkeys in Austin, Texas.

'Cheeky' indeed. How does a man win his way to your heart?

Come for a very fast run first thing in the morning – every morning, no excuses – and cook lots of healthy food with me all day.

Describe your perfect date.

Climbing a beautiful tree at sundown, watching clouds change colours.

So, clearly you're a bit of a hippy chick, right?

Yes, I'm a water baby through and through. I'm really at my happiest when I'm salty and basking in the sun. I guess I have a pretty carefree attitude. That said, I care about everything which goes hand-in-hand with the hippy chic boho vibe. The Hippy Chick is what other people call me. I see myself as being in a moment in time.

Where do men go wrong with women?

They don't cuddle us all day when it's that time of the month. Being moody doesn't exist when you are being cuddled.

What is the weirdest thing you find attractive in a man?

I like a bit of a kooky/awkward/unique style.

You're a festival reporter for MTV. How'd you land this gig?

My manager John asked what I really wanted to do and I said, "Be on MTV." Next thing, I was asked to be a style ambassador and it evolved into being part of a really cool show called *MTV It Girls*. It's so fun.

All this and you turn 20 this month. What is your birthday wish?

Well, if I told you it wouldn't come true!

Fair enough. So, what's next up for you?

After launching Cheeky Swim to the Aussie market, which is so exciting as swimwear is something I'm so passionate about, I'm going to New York and L.A. before coming back home for the summer. Then I'll move my butt to New York, keep building my career, be inspired, and continue to hopefully inspire other people to do what they love to do!

Cheeky Swim by Mimi Elashiry is available exclusively at Glue Stores nationally and online at gluestore.com.au from October 6

THIS PAGE: **MIDNIGHT
LUXE** TOP, \$59; **MIDNIGHT
LUXE** BOTTOM, \$49

OPPOSITE PAGE: **BOHO
PRINCESS** TOP, \$49







OPPOSITE PAGE:
EVER SO CHEEKY
TOP \$49; **EVER SO**
CHEEKY BOTTOM, \$39

THIS PAGE:
PIECES OF ME
TRIANGLE TOP, \$59;
PIECES OF ME
BOTTOM, \$39

COVER GIRL





STATUS UPDATE

NAME: “Ismeen Elashiry. ‘El’ is similar to ‘Of’, so therefore my surname is like ‘of the Ashiry family.’”

BORN: October 5, 1995 in Murwillimbah, NSW.

NICKNAMES: “Most people find Mimi short enough but ‘Mims’ is a popular one and my mum calls me Meem.”

HOBBIES: “Dancing, analog photography, cooking, stealing succulents.”

FAVOURITE DRINK: “I don’t really like drinking but, time and place, – tequila shots!”

PHOBIAS: “Big statues and dinosaurs. Since my childhood, I’ve always found statues super creepy. As for dinosaurs, what’s to like about them?”

HANGOVER CURE: “A fresh coconut. There is genuinely nothing better, hangover or not!”

SUPERPOWER DESIRE: “To be able to fly because I love skydiving.”

LIFE MOTTO: “All you have is here and now, so surrender and just be.”

INSTAGRAM & TWITTER: @mimiashiry

WEBSITE: www.mimiashiry.com

OPPOSITE PAGE:
BOHO PRINCESS
HALTER TOP, \$49

THIS PAGE: **EVER SO**
CHEEKY BOTTOM, \$39

INTERVIEW **SANTI PINTADO**
PHOTOGRAPHS **CHEEKY**
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SHIP! EDM CRUISE AND TRIES NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT**

UNITZ

DAY 1

IT'S EITHER THE 10-foot waves, the four shots of tequila, or the shifting tempos of "Heartbreak in Motion" by Australian DJ Anna Lunoe – or maybe it's all of the above – but I'm feeling a little dizzy as the MSC Divina steams toward the Bahamas on an overcast evening in late February. Make that very dizzy.

Adding to the effect is the presence of a guy in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle costume bouncing up and down next to me. He's holding a sign featuring a picture of Michelle Tanner, the *Full House* munchkin played by the Olsen twins. The Ninja Turtle has printed a word bubble by her mouth: I WANT TO PARTY, she's saying, followed by something else she supposedly wants to do, of which Uncle Jesse definitely would not approve.

As Lunoe builds on the beat, the surging mass of revellers disgorges two young women onto the stage. They begin to undress. A moment later, one drops to her knees, places her head in her friend's crotch, and goes to town.

I glance at the man on my left, who seems not to have noticed the half-naked women having sex with each other a few feet away. He's dressed as a giant penis. His costume appears homemade, and the massive head has deflated so much it blocks his vision.

As for me, I'm a long way from home. My nine-to-five desk job is but a distant memory. So are my lease, my beloved girlfriend, and my CSA membership. At a moment in my life when I'm supposed to be taking on the responsibilities of a mature adult, I have instead run headlong in the opposite direction: booking a ticket for a 60-hour party that takes me straight to the frenetically pounding heart of the EDM movement.

This is the fifth iteration of Holy Ship!, a sea-borne party that brings together the biggest acts in electronic dance music – the fastest growing genre in the United States – packs them into a cruise ship with 4,000 of their most ardent fans, and looses them upon the Gulf Stream. After setting sail from the Port of Miami, the ship is beset by a storm, making for a clumsy and somewhat nauseating first evening as the giant vessel pitches from side to side. Not that the weather is dampening anyone's spirits. Here, anything is possible. You can drink all the booze you want and stumble back to your cabin without a care (just steer clear of the balconies). You can get stoned and sate your munchies with an endless buffet. And you never, ever have to stop listening to dance music. In fact, it's piped in through the ship's PA system, so you don't really have a choice. Energy starting to fade? There's a solution for that, too, not that we'd advise it. "MOLLY LIVES HERE!" reads the none-too-subtle advertisement taped to more than one berth door.

Conceived in 2012 by Hard Events founder Gary Richards (who deejays under the name Destructo), Holy Ship! has gone from a concert at sea to a full-on floating cultural phenomenon, described as "Burning Man on a boat." Instead of the DIY structures, tribes, and psychedelics of its desert counterpart, Holy Ship! has a big-ass ocean liner, a hard-core group of devotees – known as "ShipFam" – and, despite an official ban on drugs, seemingly enough stimulants smuggled aboard by guests to keep the 1986 Mets playing through December.

"It's become sort of like a religious cult," Fatboy Slim, a.k.a. Norman Cook, tells me. He was on the first-ever Holy Ship! and is one of the headliners this time around. (The line-up also includes Skrillex, Baauer, DJ Snake, and Ty Dolla \$ign.) "Everyone is devoted to the total hilarity and stupidity of it all."

"Holy shipp!" a girl named Kat, who has the room next to mine and is wearing only a bikini top and cutoff jeans, screams into the brisk night. She leans over the railing and takes in the dark sea. "We're finally f-king here!"

Only hours before, Kat and I had been drinking in my cabin, watching the sun set over the Miami skyline while she took hit after hit from her vape pen, which was filled with hash oil. Hailing from Philadelphia, the 23-year-old works at her parents' furniture-liquidation business. She told me she had been looking forward to the cruise all year. "This is where I live, man."

At the moment, however, Kat is looking a little green, having started the evening with multiple shots of tequila. She shares a menthol cigarette with me as her friend Sam talks about his life back home as a DJ known as Alien Fuel. "But here, I'm not a DJ. I'm just a fan, y'know?"

I excuse myself, stepping into the corridor. A man dressed in full Middle Eastern formal wear, including a kaffiyeh, all of which happens to be dyed neon green, is banging on a cabin door, having gotten locked out of his room. I ask him what inspired his costume, seeing as how most of the get-ups – like the dozen sharks, Power Rangers, and giant penguin I've seen in just the past half hour alone – have a much sillier vibe.

"I'm from Dubai, mate," he tells me. "This is how I normally dress."

I head for the La Luna lounge on the ship's Apollo deck. The space boasts a grand piano and features an unobstructed view of a glass elevator. As I sit drinking whiskey, I watch an impromptu show as one elevator passenger after another flashes the crowd: a breast here, a dick there, an arse or two. One person has meticulously shaved all of her body hair, generating awe and then applause from the assembled. Meanwhile, in front of the bar, a girl in a bathing suit is writhing on her back, her curly dark hair fanned out behind her, considering whether to accept her friends' suggestion that she "butt-chug" a shot of tequila (which, for the uninitiated, is exactly what it sounds like). I duck out before the matter is resolved.

Outside of the Black & White club, one of the four venues on the ship, a man dressed as a banana is having a hard time standing up.

"I got this," he says to no one in particular, leaning against a pillar.

The main event of the evening is the Skrillex show, which takes place in a massive theatre more typically devoted to Broadway-style spectacles.

At 4 a.m., a sound resembling that of a jackhammer mating with a disco ball blasts from the speakers: This is Skrillex. The theatre is packed. Everyone from all the other stages has converged on this single space. Now 27, he still has the look of an angry adolescent – and a petulant attitude to match, constantly berating us for not making enough noise. Before long, though, he gives us what everyone has come for – his patented "drop," where he cuts off the bass and then turns the music up really loud. The concussive force of the drop removes any resistance the listener might have to dancing. In fact, the body instinctively begins to move, perhaps as a defense against the audio barrage it's sustaining. Skrillex jumps up and down on the stage, unsatisfied with the effect.

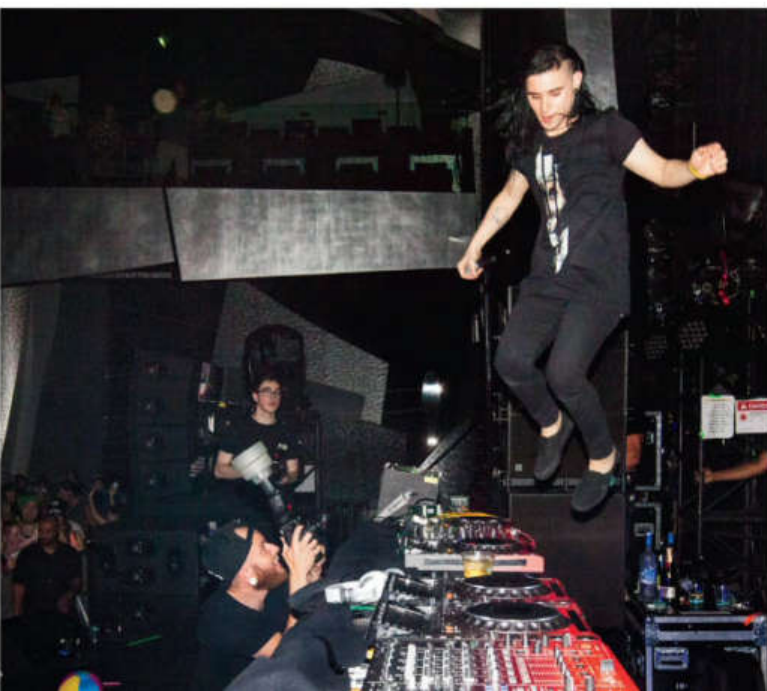
"Make some motherf-kin' noise!" Skrillex screams, and everyone does – even the banana, who has made a miraculous recovery. He's not hard to spot, gyrating on the dance floor, thrusting his hips at nothing in particular. After one final plea that we make some noise, Skrillex brings the set to a close, and everyone heads to breakfast.

Not me, though. Instead, I attempt to get some fleeting sleep as the boat makes its way across a rocky sea, the constant

**"EVERYONE
IS DEVOTED
TO THE TOTAL
HILARITY AND
STUPIDITY OF
IT ALL," FATBOY
SLIM TELLS ME.**

Clockwise from top:
Vanessa Giovacchini of Posso
shows the Sunrise Sermon
crowd with Champagne;
Two attendees share a kiss;
Skrillex pumps up the crowd

Previous spread:
Fatboy Slim amps up the
Holy Ship! hordes





DAY 2

thump of bass worming its way into my uneasy dreams.

A FEW HOURS LATER, I MYSELF make the journey to the buffet. Today's theme is Mardi Gras, and by the time I've gotten my French toast and eggs, I am covered in beads. Most everyone seems to be ordering Champagne bottle service to go

along with breakfast – everyone except for a single couple. They look a little out of place. For one thing, they're over 30. Well over 30. For another, they're wearing nonironic bumbags.

I later learn they are Nebraskan – contest winners who arrived to take a free cruise and wound up in what must have seemed like the seventh circle of hell. The other revellers take pity on them, however, approaching the couple with friendly smiles and doing their best to make them feel welcome.

"See, this is what ShipFam is all about," Emily Morin later tells me earnestly. "Once you're on the boat, you're all connected, no matter what." Morin is the unofficial leader of ShipFam, the cadre of Holy Ship! devotees who attend the cruise every year. "I had to borrow money from my dad for that first cruise," she confides. "I might have told him a few white lies about exactly what the money was for, though." In order to make time for this year's cruise, Morin quit her job as a phlebotomist.

She's not the only medical professional on board. In a hot tub on the pool deck, a man in sunglasses tells me that he brought along more than 30 IV bags to help his buddies stay hydrated. "I'm an EMT, so I can just get them back in working condition, no problem."

It hasn't done much good for the friend sitting beside him, though, who sports a black eye.

"Yeah, man," the friend explains. "The second he put the needle into my arm, I completely passed out. I bashed my head right into the wall."

He's not alone. The number of injured passengers is climbing. I start to spot casts I hadn't noticed before, and arms dangling limply in slings. The unstoppable force of partying has evidently met a few immovable objects. At one point, a girl loses consciousness in the pool and slips under water. She's quickly plucked onto the deck by Holy Ship! employees, placed in a wheelchair, and taken to the infirmary.

Eventually I make my way to the artists' deck upstairs, where the DJs have access to a VIP buffet, a pool, and a hot tub. The area is calm, orderly, and sedate. This is where the beautiful people are.

Sitting there sipping a fruit cocktail, I gaze out onto the pool deck below, where the rabble stretch their battered bodies in repose, their ill-considered tattoos glistening in the sun. I wonder about the life decisions I've made. How hard would it be to earn millions making music – or, to be technical, cuing up other people's music and pressing play? Of course, it would help to be six-feet tall and Swedish, but you can't win them all, right?

I reluctantly leave the artists' deck. It's time for the "robe ceremony," where the true religious nature of the Holy Ship! experience is manifest. In a lounge stocked with beer and

**"I WOULD
THINK THIS WAS
ALL STRANGE IF
THE PEOPLE
SUCKED, BUT
THE PEOPLE
DON'T SUCK."**



Opposite page:
There's a very
relaxed dress code
at the Black & White

This page, from top:
Partygoers dance on
the haze of the always-on
smoke machines, and the
constantly crowded pool deck



pizza, I find a collection of passengers all wearing large blue bathrobes. This is the “OG ShipFam,” a group of true diehards who have been on every single cruise, now welcoming new adherents to their ranks (after relaxing the entry requirements).

I pull aside a man with bushy hair and sunglasses. He calls himself Broshi. “I will never miss one,” he vows. I ask him how he pays for the annual trip, which sets him back a few grand each year. “I’m a process server,” he says, “like the dude from *Pineapple Express*.”

Another OG ShipFam member, Alli Meers, met her boyfriend on a previous cruise. “We connected from the start,” she says. “This is our first Holy Ship! as an official couple, so we’re pretty excited.” The OGs gather onstage for a photo, their blue robes fluttering.

Every ShipFam member I speak with testifies to how much they owe to the cruise, and just how amazing Destructo is. Their eyes seem to light up when discussing him. He’s shown up at fans’ birthday parties on the mainland, signed every body part imaginable, and generally gone out of his way to make everyone feel welcome. As odd as it sounds, given the drunk Power Rangers walking around, the spirit of the event is very heartfelt and genuine. “I would think this was all strange if the people sucked, but the people don’t suck,” Vanessa Giovacchini, one half of the female DJ group Posso, tells me in the ship’s cafeteria. “So I’m down with the cult. People are positive here – they’re open, happy, and grateful.”

I catch up with Destructo himself as he finishes up his first set of the evening. Fans swarm him as he leaves the stage, showering him with gifts: shoes with his name embroidered on the heels, a shirt, paintings. “People ask my office for my shoe size,” he says. “It’s crazy.”

Now on the wrong side of 40, Destructo has been in the game long enough to see electronic dance music go from a ridiculed niche to one of the most popular genres in the world. Up in his room, the Sophia Loren suite, there are pictures of Loren everywhere. In fact, the Divina is dedicated to the Italian actress. Destructo cosies up to one of the

photos and pretends to tickle Loren’s bountiful armpit hair.

In a few hours, he will ascend to the stage again as dawn breaks over the Atlantic, doing a set he calls “the Sunrise Sermon,” a tradition dating back to his early years as a DJ in Los Angeles in the ’90s. Noticing that people dancing at weekend warehouse parties seemed eager to keep the party going after the music stopped at four, he secured a space near some of the larger venues. “My two buddies and I dressed up like priests, and pretty soon we had a line around the block at six in the morning.”

As another night of music and consumption gets under way, I notice that while the attendees look increasingly frazzled, the ship itself has remained immaculate. A small army of workers is constantly tending to it, cleaning the soiled pools, mending the ruined handrails, and disinfecting the various reeking puddles of unknown origin with which guests have decorated the hallways.

I ask a crew member if this is his least favourite voyage of the year.

“Not really,” he tells me. “I love the energy. The main problem is that nobody ever wants to get off the ship when it’s all over. We have to pretty much kick them off.”

The sky is lightening as Destructo launches into the second hour of his marathon sermon set. I find myself standing with around 30 of the guest DJs, who have crowded the stage behind him. For them, it’s just another stop on a whirlwind circuit of never-ending parties. For me, it’s beginning to feel like something more. Though not a big EDM fan, I’m starting to understand why no one ever wants to leave. It’s not that I really want to quit my job. And I do miss my girlfriend. But I am beginning to see the beauty of the thing. A good EDM set feels like it should last forever. A perpetual pounding, racing along with one’s own heartbeat. A few days on the Holy Ship! feel like a glimpse of a brave new eternity – frightening but perfect – in which our robot overlords keep the beat going long after our worn-out bodies have reached their lonely mortal ports.

Or maybe I’m overthinking it. “I’m not trying to have any kind of message or statement,” Destructo tells me. “I’m just trying to get people to escape the real world and be able to have a good time for those three days, or whatever, and just forget about all the bullshit in the world.”

DAY 3

THE SUN RISES ON YET ANOTHER turbulent morning at sea. In the dining hall, I spot the couple from Nebraska, dejectedly picking at their cereal and fruit. The day’s planned beach excursion has been cancelled on account of rough surf, and we’ll be confined to the ship.

Most of the voyagers look exhausted, albeit still incredibly energetic – perhaps due to a “use it or lose it” mentality among those who’ve brought along various substances that can’t legally be brought back through customs.

As the Miami skyline comes into view, I find myself longing for land. No doubt some of my fellow shipgoers feel the same. In the half-light of a winter morning, the world will return to them with an alarming clarity. Their heads will be throbbing and filled with strange visions. Their bodies will ache for a surface that isn’t shifting beneath them. And their wallets will be lighter – in some cases, much lighter, depending on the size of the bar tabs they’ll reckon with before disembarking.

And so we find ourselves, like shipwrecked sailors, stepping onto terra firma, gasping for air, our benders complete, our hangovers just beginning. I sit on the curb and take a last look at the other weary and distressed partygoers, in turn dozing off, dry heaving, or just staring at mobile phones now blinking back to life. One by one, they stumble off, seeming rudderless. Eventually, I hail a cab. It’s time to go home. ■



TURN IT UP WITH OUR GLOBETROTTER'S GUIDE TO THE BEST NIGHTCLUBS IN THE WORLD

Los Globos

LOS ANGELES

Every weekend, this compact, two-story dance floor dive in L.A.'s Silver Lake neighbourhood draws a dedicated party crowd with its marathon DJ sets, including the occasional surprise performance from heavyweights like Skrillex and Moby. In addition, Los Globos hosts live indie shows, from old-school R&B to death metal to psychobilly, every night of the week. Get there early to beat the line – which on Fridays and Saturdays snakes down Sunset Boulevard.

Berghain

BERLIN

Housed in a former power plant in an industrial part of the city and rigged with one of the most powerful sound systems on Earth, Berghain is where Berliners converge on weekends for more than 60 straight hours of EDM-fueled weirdness. Not for the faint of heart – there's a good chance you could step into an orgy when you visit the men's room (which here also happens to be the ladies' room). The non-stop party runs from Friday night until Monday afternoon.

XOYO

LONDON

For all their stuffy corner pubs and lukewarm ale, the Brits know how to party. And XOYO is where they do it. The nerve centre of the East End's vibrant electronic music scene and a mecca for "I'll sleep when I die" European ravers, this Shoreditch nightclub features three-month residencies with world-class DJs like dubstep guru Skream. But it's not all face-melting bass and laser light shows. The venue also has an eclectic roster of performers including Mos Def and A\$AP Rocky, who both recently made surprise appearances.

Baby's All Right

BROOKLYN

In a city flush with great music venues, this anything-goes nightclub in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighbourhood is a standout. Since opening in late 2013, Baby's has become one of the city's best places to catch indie shows – especially hard-core breakouts like Fat White Family and Palma Violets, as well as hipster favourites like the Pizza Underground, Macaulay Culkin's bizarre, pizza-themed cover band. After the live act packs up, the dance party kicks off and doesn't let up until 4 a.m.

Le Baron

SHANGHAI

After conquering the scenes in Paris, London, New York, and Tokyo, club magnate André Saraiva brought Le Baron to Shanghai. Situated on the seventh floor of an office and designed to evoke a seedy strip joint, Le Baron Shanghai only looks like a place to avoid. In fact, with the likes of Kanye and Cara Delevingne, it's clearly the place to be. And the fun is just starting: In May, it expanded to another floor designed like a swanky apartment for the ultimate after-party.

Wanderlust

PARIS

Located in the hulking La Cité de la Mode et du Design, the fashion and design centre on the banks of the Seine, Wanderlust is open primarily during the summer. The club's wooden terrace – fitted with an outdoor bar, a Ping-Pong table, and a fleet of lounge chairs – is prime real estate for a big night out among hot Parisian hipster girls who turn out in droves when the weather is nice. On summer evenings, when house-music legends like Todd Edwards and Dirty Vegas man the decks, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better-looking dance floor.

Rio Scenarium

RIO DE JANEIRO

When it comes to nightlife, few cities can compete with Rio. And Scenarium is the best Brazilian bacchanalia of them all. This enormous club, spanning four buildings and filled with antiques, has multiple dance floors and bars. You'd better brush up on your moves, because the music never stops, with a rotating cast of live samba bands and DJs going all night long. Reservations are a must.



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OPPOSITE PAGE:
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Hey, mate, how'd this fashion shoot go?

It went really well. It was too easy – the crew was great to work with and the photos are really cool. Plus, I got to drink whisky at midday which is always a good thing.

We do what we can here at MAXIM. What did you love most about the day?

The Armani suits were banging and I loved the hotel (the Langham Sydney) where we shot this. In fact, I liked it so much I ended up moving into it. That is, until I head back home to Los Angeles.

You've lived in L.A. for a while now. Why is that?

Well I moved to L.A. a few years ago, when I was offered a job hosting

a show. However, as Murphy's Law would have it, my career took off in Australia and the UK, and then *The Voice* came along. So, ever since moving to L.A. I've practically been living out of a suitcase and hotels. While filming *The Voice* in Sydney I lived at the QT hotel but after this shoot moved into the Langham. When I work on *House Husbands*, in Melbourne, I also stay in a hotel. I've been living in hotels since February this year.

For those who don't know much about Darren McMullen, tell us a bit about your background.

Well, I'm Scottish and I moved to Australia when I was 12. My parents had been out here years before I was

born and made the mistake a lot of Brits make by deciding to go back home after two weeks. They were like, "Oh shit, what are we doing in this cold, miserable country instead of one of Sydney's beaches?"

You started out in marketing, right?

Yes, I did go for jobs in the field I was in which was sales and marketing. I knew that if I was comfortable doing a nine-to-five job I wouldn't have that killer instinct and hunger I needed to strive for this goal to become a TV host. So, I just said no to everything that wasn't going to further the sales career and did a lot of jobs for free at first because people are willing to do this stuff for

free. The caveat for that is if you stick at it long enough it pays off. I've been doing hosting for 10 years now and I land a show like *The Voice*. But you never know how long these shows go for, we may have only one more season of *The Voice* and then it's back to the dole line for me.

What's the toughest thing you've had to deal with in this industry?

Well, it's tough but you do have to deal with a lot of rejection, especially with acting roles. And you have to have thick skin and just need to take it all on the chin. And understand it's not personal. My mentality is that I may not be the most talented person in the room but I am the hardest worker.



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How'd you land the gigs on *The Voice* and *House Husbands* and what's your advice for people wanting to get into TV?

Well, in this industry, it's not who you know, it's who you blow, and I have very skimp knees to prove it. Failing that, just work bloody hard and don't take no for an answer. I actually get this question a lot and my advice, to people who ask how I got into this, is: can you do anything else? If so, I highly recommend it.

If you had to choose a team in *The Voice*, who would it be?

That's tough, man. I know the Madden brothers so well that it would be an absolute

laugh with those two guys. If I went on Team Delta she would just drill me because she's a real technical singer and I'm nowhere near that level. Jessie [J] is the same, a real perfectionist and with Ricky Martin you wouldn't get any work done because you'd just be staring into his eyes all day. He just has this presence about him.

How far would you get on *The Voice*?

Well, if I got past the blind auditions and they turned around and saw it was me, you'd think they'd have to keep me in for the battle round. Surely there'd be some kind of level of friendship there? Maybe they'd

pair me with someone crap then after I made it past that round I'd be on my own. I wouldn't be winning the show that's for sure. Let's be honest, I'd be very lucky to make it past the blind auditions.

Having Sonia Kruger co-hosting this year, did you make any *Big Brother* jokes on set?

Yes! When she first started on *The Voice* she went to do her first link, in front of the live audience, and we were doing the big opener and she's come out and said, "Welcome to *Big Brother*... oh shit, sorry, wrong show." The whole audience cracked up and I was like, "It's time to go... Sonia." It kind of broke

the ice, so it worked out really well.

You play gay character, Alex Moreno, on *House Husbands*. How did you research for this role?

Well, I'm a method actor so I just hung out at gay nightclubs in Sydney where you start to get a feel for things. That, and my Grinder profile, of course. It really helps me understand the gay world. And I'm kidding, of course.

Do you have complete say on what you wear on *House Husbands* and *The Voice*?

Yes, but you have to work up to that level. I







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PERRIER CHAMPAGNE

meet with the stylist first and they have about 10 options for what I can wear. It's best to pick four absolute no-no's that you'd never wear because if you leave these in the mix they're always going to be the four they pick. Then you hope they choose the one you like most out of the remaining six.

Still, pretty handy to have someone dress you every day, right?
 Yes. From doing shows like *The Voice* and *House Husbands* you're afforded the luxury of having a stylist and so you actually see what goes with what and develop your own style. Unfortunately, it can also make you lazy. For pretty much most of the year I've been doing these two shows and

have been dressed by someone else. I know as soon as I get back to L.A. I'll be like, "Er... what goes with jeans? What colour shoes do I wear?"

How would you best describe your fashion sense and style?

Eclectic. When I dress up I really like to dress up, but when I'm not at an event or not working it's a very relaxed look – baseball cap, tracksuit... very underplayed and comfortable. When I'm underdressed I tend not to get noticed as much, but dressed nicely I'll have people come up to me and say, "Hey, there's what's his face..." or "There's that guy from *Minute To Win It*."

What do you look for in a suit?

I like a very tailored suit.

I pretty much get all my suits tailor made because once I buy them I like it to be a slim cut. It's weird because I get all these beautiful suits to wear on *The Voice* and they're all tailored to my size, but usually when I try to wear them to an event six months later none of them fit anymore. Too many beers perhaps? This year it's the opposite – I'm actually losing weight! It must be all the golf I'm playing these days. I'm walking about four miles a day.

Yes, you're a bit of a golf nut but you strike us as more of a driving-a-buggy man.

No, not at all. Us Scots are purists when it comes to golf and whisky. You have to walk. I actually play

like crap when I ride a buggy because you're not thinking about your next shot and you're not really gauging where your ball is, compared to walking. You just jump in the buggy and you're there. No time to think.

Finally, if you could launch your own clothing line what would you call it?

I actually did have a clothing line once – it was called Scottish Romance and we did T-shirts with different styles and patterns. It was pretty cool but it's tough launching a clothing label as you have to be fully committed and throw a lot of money into it. It's something I will dabble in again and I actually want to do a cool high-end line of golf attire.

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The American

Can a former prep schooler from Baltimore, USA help protect the Christians of Mesopotamia from the Islamic State? A dispatch from northern Iraq

BY ADAM LINEHAN



“ONCE YOU BECOME AWARE OF THE BRUTALITY OF THE MODERN WORLD, THERE'S NO PLUGGING BACK INTO THE MATRIX”

IF THERE WERE AN AWARD FOR THE AMERICAN WITH THE LONGEST RAP SHEET IN THE MIDDLE East, Matthew VanDyke would be a top contender. By his own estimate, the 36-year-old from south Baltimore has been arrested in Iraq no fewer than 20 times, each time for essentially the same offence: being an American with no official business in Iraq. The last time, he and a friend were mistaken for Al Qaeda operatives at an Iraqi Army checkpoint on the road from Kurdistan to Baghdad. They were on motorcycles, headed to the Iraqi capital to begin filming an adventure documentary called *Warzone Bikers: Baghdad to Bagram*.

VanDyke's bike was damaged during the arrest, and after he defiantly asked the Iraqi soldiers to fix it, the duo were hooded, beaten, and driven to a compound in Baghdad where they were lined up against a wall and mock-executed. “I figured we were going to die, but I wasn't about to give them the satisfaction of seeing me afraid,” VanDyke says matter-of-factly. “But don't worry. Those days are over.” I'm glad to hear it, because right now, as he's telling the story, we're driving through Iraq on some very unofficial business.

There are two others in the Toyota Hilux: an ex-U.S. Army para-trooper called Kojak and our driver, a burly Iraqi in his early 30s with a DIY tattoo of a cross on his wrist. The Iraqi, I'm convinced, is trying to kill us – swerving through an endless procession of oil trucks at 140 kilometres per hour as we ascend along a narrow two-lane road into the bright green mountains of Kurdistan.

Sitting shotgun, VanDyke is the only one wearing a suit, his chin-length hair slicked back like an '80s-era investment banker or a Hollywood hitman. Kojak is sporting the usual gun-for-hire getup: a baseball cap, tactical cargo pants, and a vigilant stare on his bearded face. I'm hungover, squinting like a newborn because I left my Ray-Bans back in Erbil. It's a confusing sight for the peshmerga soldiers manning the numerous checkpoints that line the route to Dohuk, a remote mountain town about 80kms north of Mosul. Each time we're stopped, I try not to imagine what the soldiers would do if they discovered the cache of flak jackets, camouflage uniforms, and tactical radios hidden beneath our luggage in the bed of the truck. Or if they knew that we're on our way to meet with members of a Christian paramilitary group so my two American compatriots can begin training and equipping them to go to war. But VanDyke doesn't seem the least bit concerned. He's done this before.

IMAGINE IF SOMEONE handed you a button and said that if you pressed it, a firing squad would wipe out a whole platoon of Islamic State fighters. Chances are you'd press it all day. The importance of defeating the Islamic State is one thing citizens of the civilised world can agree on. But when a guy – a civilian, a Baltimorean, with no actual skin in the conflict – picks up a rifle and heads to the front, his motives are immediately called into question. Is he a lunatic? A zealot? A profiteer?

Since taking up arms with rebel forces during the Libyan civil war in 2011, VanDyke has found his life's calling as a frontline player in myriad Middle East conflicts. To some, he's a man of action, a champion of the underdog, a self-styled revolutionary who's willing to give his life to help justice and democracy prevail in one of the most oppressive regions of the world. To others, he's simply a guy who likes sticking his nose where it doesn't belong.

VanDyke's latest endeavour, a “nonprofit security contracting firm” he recently established called Sons of Liberty International (SOLI), might just be his most polarising yet. Its mission is to provide “free security consulting and training services to vulnerable populations to enable them to defend themselves against terrorist and insurgent groups.” Right now, that vulnerable population is the Christians of northern Iraq – an ancient ethnic minority group known as Assyrians – who took up arms last summer when ISIS rampaged through their native land. The plight of the Assyrian people has sent shock waves through Christendom, raising concerns that their very existence is at stake. “More biblical activity took place in Iraq than in any other country in the world except Israel,” says former U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf, who thinks Washington should provide more military aid to alleviate the crisis. “Abraham is from Iraq. Ezekiel is buried there. Daniel is buried there. It's the birthplace of Christianity.”

In many ways, SOLI's approach to counterterrorism mirrors a key pillar of U.S. military strategy in the Middle East: training, advising, and assisting indigenous forces on the battlefield.

VanDyke, however, has never served in a conventional military, and SOLI has no official ties to any government, Iraqi or otherwise. But as the international community scrambles to devise an effective strategy to “degrade and destroy” the most formidable terrorist organisation to emerge in the 21st century, the situation on the ground is sliding further

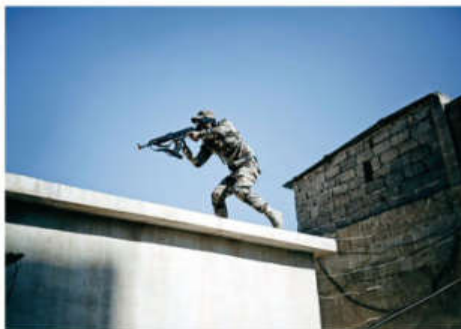
into chaos – an “anything goes” environment with scores of private militias, advocacy groups, and mercenaries pouring into the fight daily, each with its own unique motivations and objectives. “Now, obviously, ISIS isn’t a nation-state, but this should be dealt with by nation-states,” says Gen. Stanley McChrystal (Ret.), who commanded NATO forces in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010. “Whenever you have private organisations or armies enter in wars, you get dynamics that can be bad, no matter how well-intentioned they are.” As for VanDyke, his intentions are clear: help the Assyrians drive the Islamic State from their ancestral territory, which includes the ISIS stronghold of Mosul. It’s a ludicrously ambitious undertaking, fraught with gruesome possibilities. But the chaos of war is fertile ground for grand strategies. Which raises a very big question: How far is he willing to go?

MATTHEW VANDYKE’S story begins among the narrow streets and row houses of south Baltimore. After his parents separated in 1980 – a year after VanDyke was born – his father moved to Louisiana. “My grandparents lived with us, so I might have been more spoiled as an only child,” he says. “But generally it was a pretty normal upbringing.” VanDyke’s mother, then a public school principal, entered him into Baltimore’s prestigious private school system. There were piano and tennis lessons during the week and science club at a local college on the weekends. But VanDyke never embraced the lifestyle of his affluent peers. “I didn’t get along with the kids I went to high school with,” he says. “I didn’t go to their country clubs, and I wasn’t part of their social circles.”

He prevailed in academia nonetheless. After graduating with a degree in political science from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, VanDyke was accepted into the extremely competitive Security Studies program at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service at the ripe age of 22. “They almost didn’t take me because I was too young,” he says. “But I came out of undergrad with a 4.0 GPA and good recommendations from professors. So they took me purely on academics.” At Georgetown he decided to focus on Arab culture and the Middle East – a decision that in the aftermath of 9/11 all but guaranteed a career in foreign service. But not quite. “My first semester, the CIA gave me an offer of employment,” VanDyke recalls. “I got really far through the process: passed the initial interview and the assessment of my analytical abilities. I even went to Langley and met my future coworkers. But then I got nervous during the polygraph. The position was supposed to start that summer. It was already spring by then, and they said, ‘Just apply next year.’”

The American-led invasion of Iraq got under way soon after, and VanDyke quickly decided the U.S. military strategy was doomed to failure. No longer interested in pursuing a career with the CIA, he instead got involved in the antiwar movement at Georgetown. “Most of the people in the movement were peace-loving types,” he recalls. “Not me. I was like, ‘We do need to get rid of Saddam, but we need to do it a different way.’ I wanted what was later done in Libya: air support and supplying local ground forces to have people liberate themselves.”

After a year of working in a boatyard in Delaware and “basically just chilling on the beach,” VanDyke embarked on a dangerous journey that would consume the next three years of his



An NPU soldier maneuvers during a simulated combat exercise; Previous spread: VanDyke at the head of the SOLI classroom. A projector screen displays a lesson in combat leadership that’s been translated into Arabic

life. Inspired by Australian documentary filmmaker Alby Mangels, known for his *World Safari* series, VanDyke’s film *Warzone Bikers: Baghdad to Bagram* was to be a chronicle of his journey biking through some of the world’s most hostile territory. “When Alby did his adventures in the ’70s and ’80s, it was a big deal to go to Africa,” he explains. “But now a lot of people go to Africa. So I had to update it for the 21st century. But I didn’t just throw a dart at a map. I had a strong background in what I was doing.” Equipped with helmet cams and a handheld recorder, VanDyke captured his travels through Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Libya, and everywhere in between. It was, in his words, a “quest for adulthood” – one that nearly cost him his life on several occasions.

When VanDyke returned to the States in late 2010, he thought it would be for good. And then news broke that the Arab Spring protests in Libya had erupted into a revolution. During his travels, VanDyke had made “some of the best friends of [his] life” in Libya. Within a few days, he was on a plane bound for North Africa, en route to join them as they prepared to take up arms against Gaddafi’s regime.

“You go to overthrow a government and you get caught – that’s what happens,” VanDyke says of the months he spent in solitary



Clockwise from top left:
Airsoft rifles in the SOLI classroom; soldiers with the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) conduct room clearing drills; Kojak gives a lesson on door-breaching

confinement after he was ambushed and captured by pro-Gaddafi forces in the early days of the war. “Maybe I can complain about the solitary confinement, because it’s psychological torture. But I was fortunate to be a prisoner of war for only six months, not like the 42 years of Libyans living under Gaddafi.”

Freedom came unexpectedly on August 24, 2011, when VanDyke was sprung from his cell during a prison uprising. News of his escape spread quickly. Suddenly, VanDyke was famous, and the world wanted to know how a prep-school kid from Baltimore had ended up a POW in war-torn Libya. During his captivity, it was widely reported that VanDyke had been abducted while working as a journalist, a rumor that had originated with his mum. Before he left, VanDyke told her he was going to film the uprising. She believed him, unaware that he would actually be filming his own exploits on the battlefield.

When word got out that VanDyke had actually taken up arms during the revolution, the close-knit cadre of Middle Eastern foreign correspondents and human rights workers rallied to condemn his involvement in the war. The Committee to Protect Journalists – which had worked closely with VanDyke’s mother to secure his release – issued a public statement titled “VanDyke’s deception increases risks for journalists.” Peter Bouckaert, the emergencies director for Human Rights Watch, made a personal plea to VanDyke to go home. But he brushed off the entreaties and instead rejoined his old unit to finish the fight. Ultimately, his access to the rebels kept his relationship with the journalism community partly intact, and he ended up befriend-

ing several correspondents, including James Foley.

VanDyke had been on the ground since the start of the war, before NATO got involved and turned the tide in the rebels’ favour. By the time of his release, the revolution felt like his own. “When it started, there were only a few hundred of us in eastern Libya who had gone to fight, so it was very possible to make a difference on the front line,” he recalls nostalgically. “Then, after escaping prison and going back to the front line, that was the time – after Tripoli fell – when a lot of people had quit

the revolution because they didn’t want to be the last guy to die in a war. Everyone knew the fall of the regime was going to happen.” VanDyke continued fighting – and filming – until October 20, 2011, the day a bloodied Gaddafi was paraded through the outskirts of Sirte and killed. Much of the footage he captured during that time would later appear in Marshall Curry’s *Point and Shoot*, a film about VanDyke that won the Best Documentary Award at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival, and a film VanDyke has come to resent. Curry, he says, got his story wrong. (The director dismisses the claim.)

Meanwhile, after more than 30 years of estrangement,

“MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE MOVEMENT WERE PEACE-LOVING TYPES. NOT ME”

VanDyke's parents rekindled their relationship during his imprisonment. "The first time I met or even talked to my father was in the airport the day I got back from Libya," he says. His parents have remained a couple since.

Months later, he smuggled himself into Syria with the goal of making a film to build international support for the Free Syrian Army. After a month in the besieged city of Aleppo, he released a short documentary about the resistance movement there. It's unclear whether the film, titled *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution*, achieved its purpose, though it's been viewed more than 120,000 times on YouTube. Still, VanDyke insists he's not a journalist, preferring to call the film "a revolutionary effort."

During the month VanDyke spent in Syria, the battle of Aleppo was in full swing and journalists were rushing in to cover the fight. James Foley was among them, and the two crossed paths several weeks before Foley was kidnapped in November 2012. Less than a year later, journalist Steven Sotloff – another friend of VanDyke's – was also abducted in Syria. Then, in the summer of 2014, videos of Foley and Sotloff being beheaded by an ISIS fighter surfaced on the Internet in quick succession. VanDyke says a desire to avenge their deaths motivated him to do more than make a film.

In December 2014, several months after ISIS took Mosul and unleashed a campaign of terror in the Nineveh Plain region of northwest Iraq, VanDyke and three ex-U.S. soldiers moved into a small Assyrian village about 16km from ISIS-occupied territory. In short order, they established a training camp for the newly formed Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU), a Christian militia composed of volunteers from Iraq and abroad. VanDyke called the operation Sons of Liberty International. Infighting between VanDyke and his American colleagues eventually derailed the operation. But a few months later, VanDyke launched a publicity campaign to draw attention to his cause, appearing on Fox News and MSNBC. "We give people around the world an opportunity to have a tangible impact on fighting ISIS, rather than just retweeting something or clicking 'like' on Facebook," he told the *Christian Post* in April.

And it worked. Soon, private donors in the U.S. began sending money (most were Evangelicals, VanDyke says, eager to support their besieged fellow Christians), and U.S. military veterans began signing up to help train the militia and even join the fight. He says he hired a company to vet applicants – "to avoid recruiting psychopaths" – and began making arrangements to procure body armour, radios, and Toyota Hilux trucks for the NPU. "We have the ability to take a platoon of 40 men, completely equip it, train it, pay its salaries, and provide everything else it needs for a year," VanDyke said back in April. The NPU was conceived as a local defense militia – like a National Guard unit for the Christians of Iraq – but VanDyke and the senior members of the NPU soon decided that they could help prepare it to go on the offensive, first to take back the Assyrian villages that had fallen to ISIS and then to join the battle for Mosul.



From top: **Moses Moshi recently returned to Iraq after 25 years of self-imposed exile to join the NPU; Behnam Aboosh Abelmasseh is the commander of the NPU**

THESE DAYS, VanDyke has two homes. One is a loft in east Harlem, which he shares with his girlfriend. The other is a five-bedroom apartment in Erbil, SOLI headquarters, where VanDyke spends long stretches of time alone. "I haven't slept in weeks," he says, wincing in the bright Iraqi sun. It's an oven-hot morning in May, and we're standing on VanDyke's balcony, which offers a panoramic view of Erbil, a confused landscape of newly and partially constructed residential skyscrapers, with names like Park View and the World Trade Center, rising awkwardly amid blocks of modest concrete homes and domed mosques. There's an American-style mega-mall, a Hardee's, and a TGI Fridays with a full bar that serves nothing but non-alcoholic cocktails.

To our left, we can see the backside of the Erbil International Airport, where about a dozen U.S. military helicopters sit in a perfect row. VanDyke says they've been flying more frequently these days. Since ISIS advanced through northern Iraq last summer, Erbil has become the region's main staging ground for the counteroffensive. Officially, there are soldiers with the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division here providing

"command and control of the ongoing advise-and-assist efforts in support of Iraqi and peshmerga forces," as the Pentagon put it. There's also a contingency of military trainers from several European countries training the peshmerga. Then there's the unofficial reality, a Casablanca-like mix of factions and freelancers, journalists, and adventure seekers.

"IT'S REALLY A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN START OVER OR REINVENT YOURSELF. IT'S THE WILD WEST. WELL, THE WILD EAST."

"Erbil reminds me of that bar in *Star Wars*, the one in Tatooine," says Georgetown University professor Sean McFate, author of *The Modern Mercenary*. "It's a strange jumping-off point for a lot of different people." Recently, the U.S. government has pressured the peshmerga to prevent American citizens from joining its ranks (though a few occasionally slip in). That has done little to deter scores of Americans – mostly ex-soldiers and Marines – from making their way to the Kurdish front line, where a patchwork of paramilitary groups fighting alongside peshmerga forces are eager to put their skills and experience to use. Some groups, like the YPG in Syria, actively recruit on Facebook; others pick up recruits in bars in the

Christian quarter of Erbil, where foreigners hang out. An independent researcher who has interviewed dozens of American and British mercenaries in Iraq, and who asked not to be named, tells me many are on a quest for redemption. "They're guys who feel guilty about things they did when they were deployed here years ago, or they believe that ISIS wouldn't exist had they never invaded Iraq. Or they're just running from something. This is a place where you can start over or reinvent yourself. It's the Wild West. Well, the Wild East."

"I used to live over there," Kojak tells me, pointing with a cigarette toward an airplane hangar adjacent to the row of American helicopters, where until a year ago he was reportedly stationed as a security contractor making \$565 a day for a firm he refuses to identify. "It's crazy being on this side of the fence without a sidearm." Before that, he says, he was an Army paratrooper, retiring as a senior noncommissioned officer after a robust 20-year career that included a stint as an instructor at West Point and two combat deployments – the last to Mosul, where he trained and advised the local SWAT team. Now he's working for VanDyke pro bono. "I love the contracting work," he says, lighting a cigarette, his third since waking up an hour ago. "Hell, it put my daughter through college. But this means a lot more." When I ask him if his faith had anything to do with his decision to join SOLI, he holds up the silver cross that hangs from his neck. "Yeah, I'm a Christian. But

I would train these guys regardless. After ISIS took Mosul, I guess I felt a bit of survivor's remorse." He tells me SOLI seemed like a more reasonable option than going straight to the front line. Maybe it is.

At one point, I travel to Makhmour, a ramshackle Kurdish village 50km north of Erbil, where a fierce three-day battle was waged during the ISIS

offensive in northern Iraq last August, and where I meet Chris Smith, a 25-year-old ex-soldier and the newest member of the peshmerga unit stationed there. With his blond hair and sunny demeanor, Smith cuts a peculiar figure in a Kurdish uniform. It's his first day on the front line, and the peshmerga soldiers want to see him shoot an AK-47, which he does, unloading a full magazine of 7.62 over a no-man's-land of dry grass toward a tiny row of trees where a contingency of ISIS fighters is apparently dug in. As far as I can tell, he passes the test.

Smith takes a deep breath when I ask him what he's doing here. "One of the things we value as Americans is freedom of religion, and ISIS is promoting its own brand of intolerance," he says. "I had a little military experience, so I just thought I was the man for the job." He tells me he deployed twice to Iraq as an infantryman with the U.S. Army but never saw combat. When he decided to drop everything and return to Iraq, he had been working at a hotel in California. Later, as I'm leaving, he stops me. "Hey, does this mean I get a free copy of MAXIM when the story comes out?" Sure, I say, where do I send it? He shrugs and grins widely. "I don't know."

AROUND NOON, we hop in a cab to Dohuk, a two-hour drive northwest of Erbil. VanDyke wants to introduce Kojak to Behnam Aboosh Abelmasseh, commander of the NPU, so they can discuss plans for the upcoming training rotation. The focus of the training will be combat leadership, attended by a small group of would-be officers and sergeants. VanDyke plans to eventually fly over more trainers from the States, including experts in marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, and first aid. But for now, Kojak will run the show. The meeting takes place on the edge of Dohuk, inside a compound that serves as housing for a few dozen Christian refugees, who peer down at us through dusty windows as we approach. Abelmasseh and several of his advisers greet us in a room furnished with nothing but four fluffy couches, all the colour of grape candy.

Below: **VanDyke writes a press release for Sons of Liberty International. With Kojak, his trainer, on the ground, he has assumed a more administrative role in the operation**



Sporting a crisp gray suit, the elderly, soft-spoken Abelmaseh has the air of a Mafioso. Before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, he says, he was an officer in the Iraqi Air Defense Force under Saddam. (Like many in the NPU, he hails from the Assyrian village of Qaraqosh, which fell to ISIS in June of last year.)

After formal introductions are made, VanDyke hands the floor over to Kojak, who snaps open his laptop and begins showing Abelmaseh the PowerPoint presentations he says he used during his stint at West Point. Abelmaseh's eyes light up, and he casts VanDyke an approving nod. "You've brought me a real trainer," he says, almost surprised.

Abelmaseh has just returned from Baghdad, where he's been working to secure permission for the NPU to exist. Without the Iraqi central government's blessing, the group – like the dozens of other militias operating unofficially in Iraq – runs the risk of being labeled a terrorist organisation. Past attempts by the Assyrians to stand up an army have been met with a crushing backlash.

"How long will this training take?" Abelmaseh asks. "How long do you want it to take?" Kojak replies respectfully. "No, I asked you a question," says the NPU commander, placing a finger inches from Kojak's chest. "Don't answer me with a question. Answer." Kojak says he'll need two weeks. Later, when I ask Abelmaseh why he wants his men trained by Americans, he tells me it's because nobody else in Iraq is capable of doing it. "The Iraqi Army and the peshmerga are trained by Americans," he says. "So how can they train us?"

His goal now, he says, is to have the NPU fight alongside the Iraqi Army when it goes on the offensive in the Nineveh Plain and Mosul, likely in the autumn. The push – which was originally supposed to happen this April – will probably be one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war, and Abelmaseh knows it. He insists that Kojak teach his men the value of conserving ammo in a firefight. Bullets are expensive, and the NPU is desperate for funds. Every shot must count. The survival of the Assyrian people hinges on their ability to fight, and fight well. Or at least that's what the events of last August have led many of them to believe.

At the NPU outpost in Alqosh, an ancient Assyrian village situated at the base of a gently sloping mountain in the Nineveh Plain, I meet Athra Kado, a 25-year-old member of the all-volunteer unit stationed there. There's a peshmerga base in town as well, but Kado isn't the first Assyrian to tell me he doesn't trust them with his security. Early last August, he says, when ISIS tore through the region, the Kurdish forces fled in droves. Alqosh was spared, but now only about 24km of rolling grassland and the peshmerga line of defense are all that stand between it and ISIS.

From the roof of the NPU outpost, there's a clear view of the Plain, including the neighboring village where Kado was taught the basics of soldiering by the Americans VanDyke recruited for the initial SOLI rotation. Kado used to be a teacher. Now, he wears an AK-47 slung across his chest, one of just a few in the NPU's slowly growing arsenal. "From that one month of training, I can tell you I'm about 30 percent capable of fighting," he says in English. "But I want to fight and I want to make that percentage more."

That evening, on a hill where the NPU has set up a machine-gun position overlooking the road that leads to ISIS, Kado unsheathes his

"IF WE HAD HALF OF WHAT THE OTHER FORCES HAVE, WE WOULD NEVER RETREAT FROM THIS PLACE"

knife and starts playfully jabbing it in the air. "If we had half of what the other forces have," he says, "we would never retreat from this place."

BY 1989, MOSES MOSHI, then a young sergeant in the Iraqi Army, had spent the better part of a decade fighting in the Iran-Iraq War. "I was tired of fighting," he says. "So when Saddam started with Kuwait, I ran." We're speaking on the lawn of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) headquarters in Dohuk, where Moshi and the 20 other NPU volunteers chosen for SOLI's leadership course are about to receive their first lesson. "I took my wife and strapped my infant daughter to my back, and

walked for seven days in the snow to Turkey." The journey cost him four toes, and he takes off a boot to prove it. After 25 years living in Australia, Moshi returned home for the first time last September. Now he wants to fight. "My mother and brother were in Mosul, and ISIS kicked them out. When I heard about the NPU, I told my wife and daughters I had to go." Moshi, who still sports the signature red beret of the Republican Guard, is the sergeant major of the NPU. He tells me he's one of eight Assyrian expats who've recently returned to join the militia.

Today is the first day of training, and the students – each having been issued an AK-47 and a notebook – appear eager to prove their mettle. Kojak, in uniform, introduces himself in the steely tone he honed over many years as an army NCO. "It's an honour to be here," he says, pausing for the translator. "I heard about what you guys were doing here, and I was inspired." On the projector screen behind him, there's a photograph of American soldiers on patrol in Iraq superimposed with Arabic script. Not wasting any time, Kojak jumps into the first lesson, titled "The Basics of Infantry Leadership." I'm immediately reminded of the early days of my own enlistment, which began at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 2006. Everything – the slide shows, the terminology, the way Kojak holds his hands behind his back when he speaks – is straight out of the U.S. Army handbook, literally. VanDyke stands rigidly at the back of the classroom, quietly surveying the scene.

The following afternoon, VanDyke hands each of the trainees a pair of goggles and an airsoft rifle for a lesson on squad-level tactics. The trainees are broken into two teams. One is assigned the role of liberator, while the other vanishes into the compound to play ISIS. After a quick pre-mission briefing, the home team locks and loads and rushes into the fray, shooting frantically as pellets zip overhead. Kojak, cigarette in hand, jogs alongside his pupils shouting pointers, like, "You guys need to be communicating more," and "Move, move, move!" Realising that the enemy fire is coming from above, the team funnels into the



VanDyke, 36, is one of just a handful of Westerners who live in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan in northern Iraq. Despite the dangers, he intends to continue working in the region until ISIS is defeated



Athra Kado, 25, stands guard on the Nineveh Plain. A self-taught English speaker, Kado was a schoolteacher before joining the NPU

headquarters building and begins pouncing from room to room en route to the staircase. On the roof, the final skirmish is quick and decisive. When the dust settles, ISIS is defeated, but spirits are high on both sides of the fight. From behind a satellite dish, a lone gunman in a boonie hat emerges and peels off his goggles. It's VanDyke, blood trickling from pellet wounds down his hawkish face.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO PREDICT how all of this will play out. "There aren't enough Christians in Iraq, and they don't have enough arms, to take on a group like ISIS," says McFate. "And if somehow the NPU did become a crack assault force, I think the peshmerga would view them as a threat. So, best-case scenario, the NPU isn't taken seriously, they have almost zero effect, and VanDyke doesn't get his head cut off on YouTube."

The battle to reclaim Mosul is widely expected to begin in the fall, and VanDyke vows to be there. The U.S. State Department rejects VanDyke's repeated claim that SOLI enjoys tacit support from the American government, which means he may be violating U.S. law. There are other obstacles as well, primarily involving other organisations competing for influence in northern Iraq. Right now, VanDyke's biggest adversary is a California-based political action committee called the American Mesopotamian Organization (AMO), "founded to influence and guide U.S. policy on matters of interest to the Assyrian American community." The AMO is the chief supplier of funds to the NPU, and it is campaigning to sever SOLI's involvement with the group.

"Matthew VanDyke is a fraud," insists Jeff Gardner, director of communications and media at Restore Nineveh Now, a subsidiary of AMO. "He represents himself as a combat veteran, but he's never served

in any recognised service anywhere – and hanging out with Libyan rebels doesn't count." Gardner continues: "He misrepresents the narrative: This is not a Christian army that will storm into cities like Mosul. It's not even an army. It's a protection unit. Its main function will be keeping the peace in places that have been liberated so people will go back home. Look, we have a major refugee crisis on our hands."

In late May, halfway through the training session, ADM officials informed VanDyke that SOLI would no longer be allowed to conduct training at its headquarters building. "AMO pressured them into doing it," says a frustrated VanDyke on the phone from Erbil. He's making certificates for the abridged version of what was supposed to be a two-week course. "I've never seen the NPU so angry. They needed more training. But AMO doesn't care about training, and it's going to get people killed." It was a heavy blow, but not an unexpected one. Over the past few months, tensions between VanDyke and Gardner have been growing, with the NPU caught in the middle.

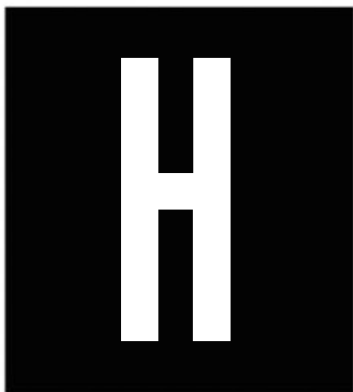
VanDyke tells me he's looking for a new training facility, and that when he finds it, he and Kojak will train the entire NPU force full-time, five days a week. He has also been meeting with other armed Assyrian groups, just in case the NPU gets cold feet. "If they decide not to be an offensive force, we'll identify another militia who will," he says, his voice resolute. "Look, the primary mission is to have a tangible impact in the fight against ISIS."

At that moment I realise VanDyke is all-in, that when the gates of Mosul are flung wide open, that's where he'll go, and hell will be waiting. I recall a conversation we had one night in Iraq. We were driving into Dohuk, and it was raining so hard I nearly jumped out of the taxi to get to higher ground. It felt like a good time to ask VanDyke if he ever thought it was a mistake, this life he's chosen. "Sometimes I question if it was a wise decision," he said. "But once you become aware of the brutality of the modern world, there's no plugging back into the matrix. There's no un-ringing that bell." Then, after a long pause, he added: "I'm fully committed to the cause. I'll do whatever it takes." ■

GERMAN GLAMOUR **ALINE CARA LUNA MEIXNER** ONLY STARTED MODELLING A YEAR AGO BUT AFTER RECENTLY SIGNING WITH A MAJOR AGENCY, THE ECONOMICS GRADUATE IS FAST BECOMING ONE TO WATCH ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE







ey, Aline, so you've only been modelling for 12 months?

Yes, I'm quite short so I never thought modelling would be an option until a friend encouraged me to get in touch with photographer Marc Collins, who shot this *MAXIM* feature. He is a genius and his first-ever shoot with me turned out really nice so I submitted the photos to a modelling agency and the rest is history.

How's it going so far?

I am really enjoying it and being in front of the camera feels really natural to me. I'm currently working in Berlin but next stop will be Rome and Milan.

Being our Woman of the World this month, and travelling the globe for your job, what is your favourite city?

Paris would be one, and Cape Town and London would definitely make my Top 10, but I couldn't choose only one. I just love to explore new cities, different kind of foods, and culture. There are so many beautiful places and I still have so many more on my bucket list.

But if you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?

Nooo! Please don't make me choose. Hmmm... I guess it would be New York City. I just love the energy, it is so inspiring and vibrating that you immediately feel like anything is possible. But I could also easily live in Barcelona or the Cote d'Azur.

Have you ever been to Australia?

No, I haven't but before I was born my dad used to work in Sydney – he just couldn't refuse the job offer. My parents always mention that their time in Sydney was the most amazing time in their lives. They even still keep in touch with some of their former neighbours who gave them a really warm welcome back then.

What's the first thing you think about Australia?

I have met quite a few Australians and you guys are so laidback, friendly and good looking! This would be my first thought followed by your diverse and beautiful landscape. I know about the different climatic areas, the Great Barrier Reef, the warm mentality, the strict immigration laws, and... I also know I have to travel to Australia as soon as possible!

You had us at "good looking". What do you find sexy in a man?

I am attracted to a good sense of humor, a healthy amount of confidence, and a sharp mind. I like guys who are grounded and straightforward – I don't like to play games.

So physical appearance is immaterial?

Well, it helps to look nice. Actually, this might sound strange but I find masculine hands really sexy. I also like the lines right over the groin – the bit that sees smart girls make stupid decisions – very sexy.

What's the funniest pick-up line you've had from a guy?

"Sorry, but you owe me a drink, because when I looked at you I dropped mine." I don't think it was true but it made me laugh and this is really all a girl could ask for. And please guys, don't go for the, "I have lost my phone number, can I have yours?" line. This is the worst pick-up line you could ever use and it won't lead you anywhere.

Describe your perfect date?

A perfect date can't be planned. No matter if you are in a fancy restaurant or in a shabby pub, it is really all about the chemistry between you and your date. But don't get me wrong, if you are not in the lucky position that you just found your perfect match it might not be a bad idea to take her to a shabby pub.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Responsible, cheerful, impatient.

What's next for you?

Milan. It will be my first time working in Italy and the market is highly competitive. I'm also planning to travel to the US in November, so I'm super excited as I'm pretty curvy for a model and the US market will work well for me. My dream would be to become a GUESS girl, I just love their visual style.

What do you want to achieve in the next five years?

I've studied economics in a dual system while working in Zurich and I'm already applying at universities for a part-time MBA (Masters) program. I love my modelling job but it won't be forever and I'm too German to not have a Plan B. Wow, I sound like I a geek! Truth is, I can really see myself having a career in management. That sounds even worse, but you get the point.

"I HAVE MET
QUITE A FEW
AUSTRALIANS
AND YOU
GUYS ARE
SO LAIDBACK,
FRIENDLY,
AND GOOD
LOOKING!"

WOMAN OF THE WORLD



A full-page photograph of a woman, Aline Cara Luna Meixner, standing on a large, dark rock formation. She is wearing a white, high-cut bikini with a small circular detail at the bust and black strappy high-heeled sandals. Her hair is wet and slicked back. The background shows a body of water and a sunset sky with warm, golden light. The woman is looking down and slightly to her left.

STATUS UPDATE

NAME: Aline Cara
Luna Meixner

BORN: July 7, 1990

LIVES: Berlin,
Germany

HEIGHT: 170cm

HOBBIES: "I'm a gym addict. Working out always cheers me up if I am stressed or in a bad mood. I do yoga and ballet – I'm a very active person. I can't stay at home a single day. I'm also a fashion addict and love to shop. My other guilty pleasure is food! I just love to eat and cook and try new restaurants."

LIFE MOTTO: "My mum always told me we only regret the chances we didn't take. Sounds simple but I really try to live by it. I don't want to look back and think I should have tried or risked certain things."

INSTAGRAM:
[@alinecaraluna](#)

FIDLAR'S
NEW ALBUM
TOO
IS OUT NOW



L.A. SURF AND SKATE PUNK UPSTARTS, FIDLAR, RELEASE THEIR SECOND FULL-LENGTH ALBUM, *TOO*, THIS MONTH, SO WE THOUGHT WE'D GET THEM TO TAKE US THROUGH THEIR 12-SONG OFFERING. BUT READ AT YOUR OWN RISK. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

1. 400Z ON REPEAT: "This song was inspired by Sublime's '40oz To Freedom'. And it's about being broke." – Zac

2. PUNKS: "This is pretty much based on a story of an old friend of mine tripping on acid and stabbing someone. Gnar." – Zac

3. WEST COAST: "I wrote this song after we did our first tour on the west coast. I came home after and was really depressed and wanted to just go back out on the road." – Zac

4. WHY GENERATION: "This song came out of my reflection on Generation Y and remembering 9/11. It's hard to fathom a lot of what goes on in the world today and it's easy to feel like there's no answer." – Elvis

5. SOBER: "This is about my girlfriend breaking up with me in rehab three days before I was

supposed to be released." – Zac

6. LEAVE ME ALONE: "This is about isolating and just wanting people to leave me the f—k alone." – Zac

7. DRONE: "This song is about feeling disconnected and paranoid. We did about three live takes and used the one that sounded like everything could fall apart at any second." – Elvis

8. OVERDOSE: "I overdosed twice in a week. This song is about that." – Zac

9. HEY JOHNNY: "These lyrics were at a first stream of consciousness. It became a letter to anyone who wants to escape the life they have." – Elvis

10. STUPID DECISIONS: "This song is about an ex-girlfriend I had that passed away while I was on tour. It's about the dumb decisions we had made." – Zac

11. BAD MEDICINE: "This is about my experience of having a close friend on heroin and how it made me feel. When the song was written, we were touring so much that it's easy to get in a sort of 'auto-pilot' mode and don't always realise what's going on around you. Then you come home and nothing's happening and life hits you all at once. You don't know how to deal with it, and the 'bad medicine' is how you destructively deal with all of it. In this case heroin for my friend, and alcohol for myself." – Brandon

12. BAD HABITS: "This song is about finding a comfort in the bad habits I have and as I get older, I realized that I am becoming just like my dad. Just because you have bad habits doesn't make you a bad person." – Zac



FIDLAR FELLAS (from left to right): Zac Carper, Brandon Schwartzel, Elvis Kuehn, and Max Kuehn

ALL BUSINESS

SYDNEY BLUES-ROCKERS, THE SNOWDROPPERS, ARE BACK WITH THEIR BRAND NEW POP-SOAKED ALBUM, *BUSINESS*. FRONTMAN JOHNNY WISHBONE TELLS US ALL ABOUT IT, TRACK-BY-TRACK



BUSINESS IS OUT NOW AND THE SNOWDROPPERS ARE CURRENTLY ON A NATIONAL TOUR. FOR MORE INFO GO TO WWW.SNOWDROPPERS.COM



Droppers like it's hot (from left to right): Cougar Jones, Johnny Wishbone, Nick London, and Pauly K

BUSINESS: "We actually decided on the title of the album before any of the songs were written, including this one. Song writing is all about tricking your brain into thinking it doesn't have to do much work – this was like, 'OK, brain, the album is all finished, you just need to write the songs to go on it.'"

LOVE LETTERS: "This is probably the most immediate, catchy song on the album, but it was also one of the hardest to write. It changed a lot, and it took a long time to get the chorus right. It was originally like a ballad but ended up more like a high-energy Motown feel. It's about feeling like you're being taken for granted in a relationship."

"MARYANNE": "Another mash-up song. I had this slow, melodic riff that sounded like The Cure. The song is about the idea of putting your head in the sand

and trying to isolate yourself from your problems."

EVERYBODY'S LOSING MY MIND: "I really like the contrast in this song between the blues verses and The Pixies-ish riff in the chorus. It's a bit '90s and the bridge reminds me of Peter Gabriel for some reason."

REPEATING MYSELF: "An upbeat pop song but there's a lot going on rhythmically and harmonically compared to most Snowdroppers' songs. It might take a while before we're able to get this one together live."

I DON'T THINK I WANT YOU TO COME OVER TONIGHT: "I've heard people describe this feeling called FOMO and in retrospect it's what this song is about – being in a relationship but worrying about getting older and missing out on life."

DEVIL CHILD: "Instrumentally this was a mix of two other half-written songs that had been floating around. I mashed them together and put it to a really groovy drum pattern and funk bassline, and it all just clicked."

ONLY WANT THE LOVIN' (WHEN THE LOVIN'S GONE): "This is one of everyone's favourites to play live. It's got a really good driving feel and it's one of those songs where the title explains everything you need to know about the lyrics!"

IGNORANCE: "A bit of a country song, this was one of the last to be finished before going into the studio. It's about that feeling of waking up thinking about what you did and said the night before... and going, 'Gggguuulllllll...'"

NEW TATTOO: "Believe it or not I actually wrote this while being tattooed. Just a silly little dedication to a hobby that, if you think about it, is absolutely bizarre."

DOWN THE STREET: "This was known as "Bo-diddley" until way after the album was recorded. It's got a real groovy, blues feel in the verses and gets a bit The Artist Formerly Known As Prince in the chorus. A bit more melodic than usual perhaps?"

HOLD ON: "This is a cover of a Tom Waits' song and we played it completely live in the studio, no overdubs, which is a first for us. We just recorded for the hell of it and weren't sure whether to put it on the album, but it works well in contrast to the rest of the songs."

THE END OF ANARCHY

WITH THE SEVENTH AND FINAL SEASON OF *SONS OF ANARCHY* OUT ON DVD THIS MONTH, PROTAGONIST AND PRESIDENT OF THE SAMCRO, JACKSON 'JAX' TELLER (AKA **CHARLIE HUNNAM**), DISCUSSES HIS CHARACTER, BIKIES, AND WHAT HE'LL DO NOW THAT THE SHOW IS OVER

SO, THE FINAL SEASON AND SHOW DONE. HOW DOES IT FEEL?

It's bittersweet. The kind of sweet side of it is this has really dictated the whole rhythm of my life for the last seven years. So, I'm kind of excited to get back to more of a gypsy way of life than a regimented routine I've gotten used to. But this has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. It's sad to say goodbye and say goodbye to the character. I loved playing this guy. I'm sure there's going to be a moment of kind of depression and having to re-explore identity and stuff coming out of this.

WHAT WILL YOU MISS THE MOST ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER, JAX?

I suppose the relationship Jax has with the club. The experience we've had through this show is kind of being a little club. Most of us rode to work together and hang out a lot. And it's that aspect of the kind of club life and the camaraderie that has

really become a central dynamic between the guys who play these characters.

WHAT ARE YOU RIDING?

I have two bikes but I mainly ride a Harley Dyna – the same bike we ride in the show. Which is unfortunate when I get photographed riding my bikes because I look like a dickhead riding the same bike as in the show, but it's just the best bike that Harley makes. A lot of Harley's are not really built for speed, but this is the one bike they make that you can ride pretty aggressively.

DID YOU EVER HANG OUT WITH SOME M-CS?

Yeah, I got to know some people really well. Through this show, I've spent an enormous amount of time in that world of bikers and clubs and the rallies and shit. I went up to Oakland and got to hang out with a very well-known club. This one kid

in particular, I met, was amazing. He was Jax Teller. His dad was in the club and had been in the club his whole life. And he was 22. He'd had 22 birthday parties in the Oakland clubhouse of this motorcycle club. He was the heir apparent, like the history and future of that club. He just had an amazing presence about him. He was like an old school outlaw, cowboy, f—king badass gunslinger. They used to say he put his gun in his belt before he put his shoes on, like he was just a straight f—king outlaw. He ended up getting killed the week after I left Oakland, right before we started shooting. So I got this necklace to wear as a memorial for him, but also the whole aesthetic of that character, literally Jax wears the jeans and the shoes he wore. I just based everything on him.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER OR THE CULTURE ITSELF?

The thing I've had the most trouble with, putting myself in the shoes and understanding, is the infidelity. I grew up in an environment where it was permissible to use violence to solve a problem but it was not permissible ever to call the police under any circumstances. My dad was a career long criminal and you weren't calling the police for any reason. So, that side of these guys' mentality doesn't bother me at all. I really understand it and, in a kind of perverse way, admire it.

IF YOU HAD TO PUT YOUR FINGER ON EXACTLY WHAT IT IS ABOUT THE SHOW THAT PEOPLE HAVE REACTED TO WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IT IS?

As the world gets more and more gentrified and the thumb of big brother comes down on us more and more, there's a real escape fantasy. That people really enjoy watching dudes that live on the wrong side of rules and do whatever the f—k they want. I feel there have been many avenues for achieving that male fantasy of being an outlaw and not being told what to do.

"PEOPLE REALLY ENJOY WATCHING DUDES THAT LIVE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF RULES AND DO WHATEVER THE F—K THEY WANT."

JAX HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM THE EARLY DAYS TO THIS LAST SEASON.

HOW'S IT BEEN TRANSFORMING HIM AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

I'm sure I've had some hand in transforming him, but I really just try to trust the scripts and the journey, and just go with the material. I try to find some kind of honest reaction to it, an honest way to bring it to life. I've never really thought in those terms that I was consciously, or even had the responsibility of evolving the character.

HAVE YOU EVER KEPT MEMENTOS FROM YOUR WORK AND WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE FROM THE *SONS OF ANARCHY* SET?

Yeah, I'm a bit of a sentimental guy in this regard. I have boxes from every job I've ever done. I have a long f—king list of things I'd like from this. The motorbike and my son's rings are the three at the top of the list. But I'll take anything I can get.



WHERE'S THE STRANGEST PLACE YOU'VE EVER BEEN RECOGNISED?

I went to look around Eyman Federal Prison in Arizona. It's a huge super max prison. We were in the wing that was separate from the super max wing. The only way you could get into this wing is by killing another inmate or attempting to kill or killing a guard whilst in prison. So these were dudes who had already committed murder, then had committed additional murders but usually of prison guards. I just kind of wanted to be as anonymous as possible.

BUT YOU ENDED UP BEING STALKED?

Well, we walked into the super max wing and everyone was hanging on their bars and shouting at us. I walked in and the level of tough energy, just violence, was so intense. I was hoping no-one recognised me but then I heard, "Yo, Jax,

where Abel at, homie?" There's no weapons or anything they could use but they'll throw piss or semen or whatever at you, just anything to ruin your day. I didn't want to look at this guy but his energy was so intense and he kept staring at me. Finally, I unintentionally caught his eye and then it was locked-in. And that haunted me for a while because I thought that guy knows who I am. He's probably never getting out of prison but it was the clearest, purest personification of evil. The guy had killed five people while he was in prison, but he would draw me in to his stare.

SO, UM, WHAT DO YOU LIKE DOING WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING?

Just normal stuff. I like to cook and hang out with my girlfriend. If I have a long period of time away from acting I tend to write. Pretty boring, just regular life. ■



Sons Of Anarchy The Final Season is out now on Blue-ray and DVD. For your chance to win the exclusive Sons Of Anarchy: The Collector's Set (left) which includes all seven seasons packaged in a special mini gas tank, go to our FB page at Facebook/MAXIMAU



Heating Up

IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHERE THE GAMING WORLD GOES NUTS AS THE BIG BLOCKBUSTERS START ROLLING IN

▲ FORZA GETS V8 BOOST

The king of race simulators is back, with *Forza Motorsport 6* landing on Xbox One this month. It's roughly twice the size of its predecessor, with over 450 cars from over 67 manufacturers, and 26 circuits, including 10 never before seen

in the series. A partnership with our own V8 Supercars series sees Mt Panorama, commentary from Mark Skaife, and 10 cars from across all five manufacturers included in the game – a huge

win. *The Stories of Motorsport* single player campaign promises 70-hours of fun, with an improved Drivatar system giving the AI a very human feel. Dynamic weather that impacts car

handling is also a welcome addition, and the fact the team went to each circuit and modelled how puddles form so it could be replicated accurately speaks to the realism of this series. *Forza Motorsport 6* has a tonne of depth, looks great and feels authentic behind the wheel – a must own for race fans.

WITH OVER 450 CARS FROM OVER 67 MANUFACTURERS, AND 26 CIRCUITS



ALSO OUT

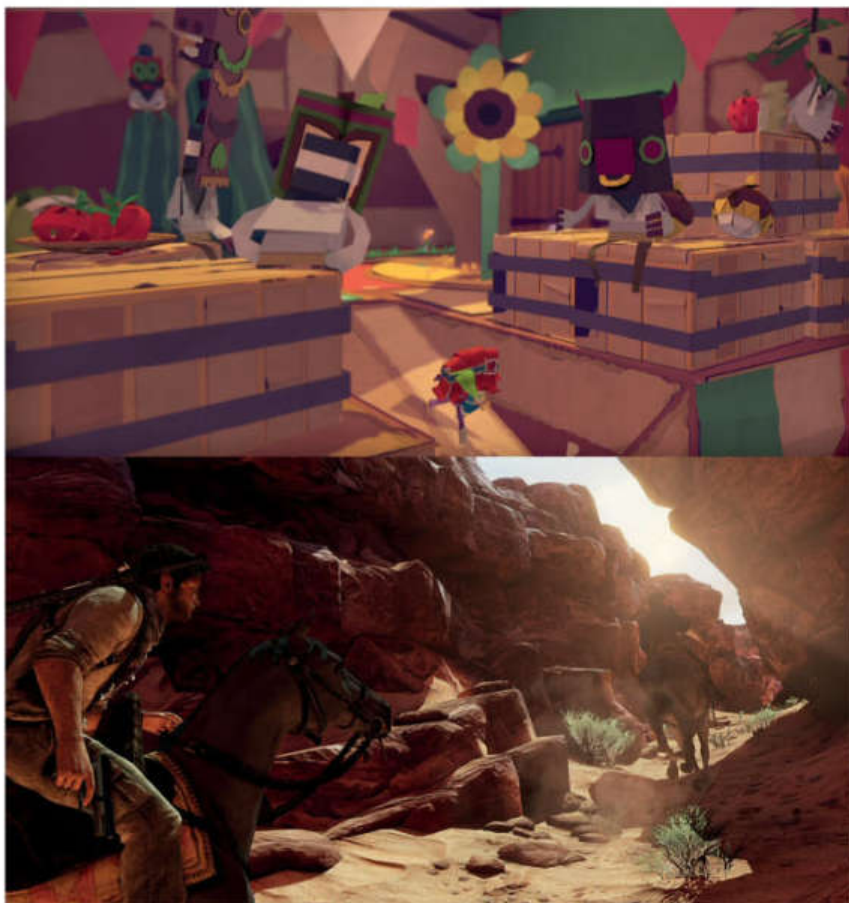
Following on from the phenomenal success of free-to-play multiplayer title *World of Tanks*, and it's follow up *World of Warplanes*, comes the third instalment

in developer Wargaming's trilogy. As its name suggests, *World of Warships (PC)* takes the battle to the seas, with deep, tactics-driven naval conflict on a range of accurately remodelled vessels.

FIFA 16 vs PES 2016

Forget Chelsea vs Manchester City, this year's biggest battle is between *FIFA 16* and *Pro Evolution Soccer 2016* (both on PC, XBO, 360, PS4, PS3) for best soccer sim in gaming. EA's *FIFA* series was a clear winner through the Xbox 360 era, but this year Konami's *PES* shows significant growth. EA remains in front when it comes to official licenses, user interface and online depth, but rather than introduce any new gameplay features – outside of the inclusion of women – *FIFA 16* focuses on fine-tuning existing gameplay. The

collisions feel more robust, the pace of players more consistent, and defence is given greater importance. *PES 2016*, however, has improved dramatically, with a large catalogue of new animations, better ball control, sharper AI and a huge visual boost. The end result isn't so much that *FIFA* has been toppled, but that *PES* is back to where it was in the PS2-era. It's a ruthless, midfield-heavy game of tactics, providing a genuine counter to the flashier, attack-minded gameplay of *FIFA*. All you have to do is identify your own style.



▲ YING AND YANG ON PS4

Sony has two games available for punters this month that are equally awesome, but polar experiences in visually spectacular worlds. The first is *Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection*, which bundles together all three PS3 games in the series for the PS4 with an HD polish. Arguably the three best games of the last generation, Naughty Dog's Indiana Jones

inspired third-person action adventure is masterfully created, thrillingly staged and just plain fun. Meanwhile, *Tearaway Unfolded* is an HD, extended edition remake of the best game ever released on the Vita. You star as a god, helping a humanoid letter deliver itself in a world made of paper. By breaking the fourth wall in incredible inventive ways, and being drenched with charm, developer Media Molecule have created a 3D platforming classic.

ALSO OUT



Fans of the long-running Solid Snake opus should keep an eye out for *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*, with the open-world stealth action landing on PS4, XBO, PS3, 360 and PC this month. Improved AI, a real-time day/night cycle and open-ended mission structure are the standout new features.

SKATE OR DIE

This generation of consoles desperately needed a skating game and old-schooler Tony Hawk has stepped up with gameplay straight out of the '90s. As the name would suggest, *Tony Hawk Pro Skater V* (PS4, XBO) isn't one of those vast open-world

titles with a lame story, but is in fact a direct sequel to the series that took the world by storm sixteen years ago. We're talking time limits, small confined arenas based on real locations, objectives to nail, gaps to find, rails to grind and so forth. It's a full flashback, but

it's not without modern trimmings, including a Create-A-Park mode, allowing you to build and share your own little "spots" with friends. We're not so stoked about the cel-shaded visual style, but it's still good to have The Hawk back in business.



MAKE YOUR OWN MARIO LEVEL

Nintendo has come up with a little gem of a title called *Super Mario Maker* for the Wii U, which gives you all the tools you need to build a 2D Mario platforming level. Using the Gamepad's touchscreen, it's incredibly easy to add, move and alter objects, items and enemies from four different eras of *Super Mario* games on your digital canvas. You can tweak the look

and behaviour, test them out on the fly and – of course – share your creation with the world. It's an addictive time sink, and if you've ever played a *Mario* game before, taking a shot at beating Nintendo at its own game is an opportunity not to miss.



KEEP ROLLIN'

Finally, footwear for workers who want to look great on site as well as out on the town

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AUSTRALIA-WIDE
DELIVERY



	SAFETY JOGGER	LACE-UP WORK BOOT	ELASTIC-SIDED WORK BOOT
LEATHER UPPER	✓	✓	✓
MESH UPPER	✓	✓	✓
STEEL TOE CAP	✓	✓	✓
COMPOSITE TOE CAP	✓	✓	✓
ANTI-STATIC SOLE	✓	✓	✓
FUEL OIL RESISTANT	✓	✓	✓
SLIP RESISTANT	✓	✓	✓
LIGHTWEIGHT	✓	✓	✓
FLEXIBLE MIDSOLE	✓	✓	✓
INNERSOLE*	PU	EVA	EVA
6 MONTH WARRANTY	✓	✓	✓
PRICE	\$109	\$109	\$79

All footwear is tested to Australian Standard 2210.3:2009. All Styles are available in a range of sizes.
* Innersoles in all Rollins Boots are interchangeable, so, if you have orthotic inserts, these can be easily removed to accommodate prescription inners

Rollins
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JOGGER

Athletic Safety Shoe

Designed for workers needing the protection of a safety boot but wanting the comfort and flexibility of an athletic shoe, the JOGGER features a composite toe cap and uses the latest injection moulding technology. Imagine not needing to carry a spare pair of shoes in the truck when you finish work – now you can just keep wearing your joggers. Manufactured to be ultra-lightweight and comfortable, they're perfect for wearing all-day long.

FEATURES:

- Composite Toe Cap – Airport and security friendly
- Extremely Lightweight
- Breathable Mesh Upper, flexible mid-sole with Polyurethane (PU) Innersole
- Sole – heat resistant up to 130°C – slip and fuel oil resistant

RRP. \$109.00

LACE-UP

Leather Steel Cap Work Boots

Sewn from full-grain leather and fully lined, extended eyelets allow these boots to be laced above the ankle for maximum support. Shock absorbing heels will keep your feet comfortable no matter how far you walk and the injection moulded soles provide durability and extended wear whilst providing safety from slips, oils and water. Rollins are so confident you'll love wearing these boots, they include a 14-day 'Comfort Guarantee' and six month warranty with every pair.

FEATURES:

- Full-grain leather construction with 'crazy horse' finish
- Fully lined upper with padded tongue and collar for maximum comfort
- Extended 'D' lace eyelets
- 200J Steel Toe for maximum protection against impact

RRP. \$109.00

ELASTIC-SIDED

Elastic-Sided Work Boots

With all the safety and comfort features you demand – steel toe cap, slip, water and oil resistant – these boots have everything you need for the job. Lightweight, Rollins Boots are designed for all-day comfort. Front and rear pull tabs make putting these boots on a breeze, and, not a lace in sight. A classic Australian work boot design, Rollins Elastic-Sided Work Boots are available with either a suede or embossed finish. What's more, added stitching ensures they are built to last.

FEATURES:

- A five-piece Leather Upper – providing strength and shape
- 200J Steel Toe for maximum protection against impact
- Lightweight – designed for all-day comfort
- Dual Density Polyurethane (TPU/PU) sole provides durability, flexibility and stability in any environment
- Also available in black

RRP. \$79.00

▼ REVIEWS

Talking hardware with Gold Logie winning TV tradie, and host of *The Block*, Scotty Cam



AEG 3-PIECE COMPACT COMBO KIT



THIS KIT INCLUDES:

- AEG 18V COMPACT DRILL DRIVER
- AEG 18V COMPACT IMPACT DRIVER
- AEG 18V COMPACT 3 MODE COMPACT RADIO
- 2 x AEG 18V 2.0AH PRO LITHIUM BATTERIES
- AEG CONTRACTORS BAG

You may not find a better compact drill kit than this. The heavy-duty 18V Compact Drill Driver is great for getting into those tight and

intricate places, while the Impact Drill would easily make the grand final of the most powerful tools in the business. Delivering an impressive 180Nm torque, this versatile tool will make your work site run more efficiently and one very happy bloke.

But let's not forget what else you get in this 3-piece belter. The Compact 3 Mode Radio is a ripper on any job and its AM/FM/AUX operation includes a 3.5mm AUX input for any phone or media player.

RRP (INC. GST) \$299.00 WWW.AEGPOWERTOOLS.COM.AU

HART 55-PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

Hexagonal shaft with magnetic tips, colour-coded caps for quick identification, ergonomic grips, SVCM steel shaft, and a multi-bit driver for wide ranging tools. Yep, these are just some of the great features included in this 55-piece screwdriver set. Perfect for the home and professional handyman, it comes in a unique case with removable lid for easy, speedy installation on your shed wall or easy-access in your car.



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Rough and ready

BY GABRIELLA PAIELLA

WITH WOMEN SWOONING OVER THE HAIRY HE-MAN TYPE KNOWN AS THE “HIPSTER”, IT’S TIME FOR AVERAGE GUYS TO PUT DOWN THE WAXING STRIP AND SEIZE THE MOMENT

HE SEX WAS GOOD. “A little bit rough, in the best way,” says Emily, a slender, 26-year-old blonde who bedded a scruffy, muscular Alaskan named Matt while he was vacationing in New York not long ago. After too many dates with wishy-washy Brooklynites, she found Matt’s assertiveness and hardy, *Man vs. Wild* looks (less Christian Grey and more Brawny Paper Towel Guy) an irresistible turn-on. And that was before she found out Matt actually worked for a logging company. “Clean-shaven is not my thing,” she explains. “Give me broad shoulders, give me a beard. I want a man who can make things.”

She’s in luck. The U.S. hipster (like his quirkiest cousin, the “lumbersexual” and “beardo”) first appeared in hip enclaves like Bushwick, Portland, and Austin several years back. Before long his calloused, manly fingerprints were all over the popular imagination, and fashion-forward dudes everywhere were donning \$375 flannel shirts and raw, meticulously prebattered denim in his image.

Now dating sites are hopping on the trend: LumberMatch and Bristlr pair the burly and the hirsute with the women who love them.

Not familiar with the type? As writer Tom Puzak put it when he coined the term last fall, the lumbersexual seems “like a man of the woods... his backpack carries a MacBook Air but looks like it should carry a lumberjack’s axe.” In urban centres, he is likely a chef, a tattoo artist, a metalsmith, or a tech guy who’s simply lost his razor. And he is giving the metrosexual a run for his money.

Not since the days of westward expansion have women so eagerly fetishised the thick musculature and red-blooded mind-set of the rugged outdoorsman. Take the popular blog *Your LL Bean Boyfriend*, which displays photos of strapping models in nubby, shawl-collared knitwear with the tagline “He will build you a table and then have sex with you on it.” Or the bewhiskered indie rocker Justin Vernon of Bon Iver, who kicked off his solo career in an isolated cabin in the wilderness.

Actress Megan Mullally found her lumbersexual mate-for-life in actor and boatbuilder Nick Offerman, of *Parks and Recreation* fame. Before she met Offerman, Mullally says, “I had dated these androgynous, semigayish rock & roll drummer types.” The first summer, Mullally visited Offerman in Minnesota: “Nick had this idea to take a romantic ride onto the lake at midnight on this pontoon. He left the headlight on as we were sort of drifting, and when he went to start the motor, it was dead. So he rowed us to shore with one paddle. It took four hours. And that was my first taste of the superhero within.”

Michael Kimmel, Ph.D., a leading masculinity scholar, says that by

choosing to dress like woodsmen and seafarers, hipsters are “evoking workplaces that were all-male [and] required a tremendous amount of physical strength.” He calls the trend “the sartorial equivalent of *Fight Club*.” Lumbersexuality serves as a welcome release from the oppressive cubicle-dwelling lifestyle – even if the bulk of time a hipster spends in the great outdoors is devoted to drinking craft beers on a bar patio.

Now the fantasy has crept into the mainstream: Reality series that explore gritty environments – *Deadliest Catch*, *Black Gold*, *Ice Road Truckers*, *Alaskan Bush People* – have become highly rated TV staples, due in no small part to their erotic appeal to a certain female viewership.

Hollywood, too, has been falling at the steel-toed work boots of the lumbersexual. Take Matthew McConaughey, who has been sporting an unkempt beard that might read as “hermit in the woods”... were it not for the stunning wife at his side. Chris Pratt may have toned up for *Guardians of the Galaxy*, but it’s his affable scruffiness that grabbed millions of women in the first place. Charlie Hunnam of *Sons of Anarchy* may boast a serious man bun, but he’s still the platonic ideal of a rustic bad boy. And *Game of Thrones* is a veritable cavalcade of raspy-voiced virility.

So what does this mean for real guys – everyday men who make their livings well beyond the confines of Greenpoint or Silver Lake, who know their way around a crankshaft and can split a piece of timber, who hunt and fish and may never once have thought of a pipe wrench as a fashion accessory?

Your moment has arrived, gentlemen. You’re hot. It’s time to take full advantage.

Because these other guys, the hipster dudes with the checked wool A.P.C. shirts? They’ve been biting your style and reaping the romantic rewards for far too long. Women don’t actually want a pale facsimile of a rigorous manly man: They want the genuine article.

Julianne, 29, a sexy Southerner, just calls them “country dudes.” Based on her personal investigations, she finds the type is generally well endowed and skilled in bed. “They have been almost uniformly super-psyched to get me naked, in a vocal but not aggressive way,” she enthuses, “and very interested in making sure I’m having a good time.” She fondly recalls “repeatedly banging an avid duck hunter in the back of a pick-up truck in a rural Georgia forest.”

Turns out that hard work – the kind that doesn’t require a mouse pad – might actually pay off after all. ■

NOT SINCE THE DAYS OF WESTWARD EXPANSION HAVE WOMEN SO EAGERLY FETISHISED THE THICK MUSCULATURE AND RED-BLOODED MIND-SET OF THE RUGGED OUTDOORSMAN.



It's Hip To Be Bare



POTENTIALLY MORE OF A THREAT THAN GLOBAL WARMING, THE HIPSTER BEARD TREND IS RISKING OUR VERY WAY OF LIFE. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SAVE THE WORLD...

The thought of living in a world overrun with guys stacking their fixed gear bicycles with no breaks makes us shudder. Ditto for guys with fetid facial hair in flannel shirts that have never even seen a shovel, or a razor. We're tired of guys avoiding manual labour, staring at Instagram for hours on end through their non-prescription glasses that make them look "cool", and choosing single origin coffee over a good can of beer. It's even having an effect on population growth, as global birth rates plummet due to women struggling to maintain relationships with bearded, homeless looking dudes.

No more! It's time for the Hipster trend to die a hasty death. What are we gonna do? Easy, host a Hipstervention.

STEP 1: BAIT

You have to be smart. Somehow con your Hipster mate into turning at the Hipstervention location. How? Build him up with promises of a vinyl sale and cold drip, single origin coffees. Here, worried friends and family will gather, waiting for their chance to cure him of his hipster ways.

STEP 2: SHAME

Get your gathering to work on him, revealing their concern about his future if he remains a hipster. Have his mum shame his haughty attitude and get friends to peer pressure him. Shame their lofty attitude, humiliating clothes and fusty facial hair. Don't stop until he's emotionally spent.

STEP 3: SHAVE

Once he's broken, take out out your top quality shaving tools and exorcise the Hipster. The BIC Flex 3 has got everything you need to safely and quickly get the dirty job done. With three flexible blades, a pivoting head, aloe and vitamin E lubricating strip and a premium rubber handle, you'll be able to shave even the skankiest of beards in no time. Once your hipster mate's been healed, he'll be able to join society as a new and recovered person.

Shave the beard. Save the world.

BIC Flex 3, will only set you back \$5.30 for a pack of three, and you can grab them at your local Coles. Once you've got it in your hand, visit thehipstervention.com to nominate a hipster friend and read up on how to Host your own Hipstervention and receive your free BIC Flex 3 razor.



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A JERKY TALE

HISTORY
OF JACK
LINK'S

The story of Jack Link's Beef Jerky is a story of family traditions. When the Link family settled in Wisconsin's Northwoods in the 1890s, they brought along old world recipes for meat products, sausages and meat snacks.



Chris Link's (above) son Earl, opened the town's first general store and butcher shop and continued the family tradition of making the best meat products. In 1916, Earl's son, Wolf Link, was born and learned the meat business at his father's side. He grew up and became a successful cattleman, raising the finest beef in the region. Before too long, Wolf had a son named Jack (below) and that's when things really took off.



More than a century has passed since the Link family staked their claim in Northern Wisconsin. Today Jack Link's has crossed the ocean and is going great guns on the Australian shores!



MUNCHIE OF THE MONTH

TIME TO EMBRACE **JACK LINK'S** JERKY

JACK LINK'S IS BEEFING UP SNACKING

Man needs meat; even hipsters with beards and a fedora hat need meat. Sure, you can get your protein from other sources like tofu, but it's hard to eat a bucket-load of tofu, especially when it doesn't taste like this delicious meat. Jack

Link's Beef Jerky will give you that low-fat, high protein fix without the need to eat mountains of Greek yoghurt and tofu. Jack Link's is the answer to your next snacking adventure – instant 2-minute noodles won't get you far and they're not even instant! Grab some Jack Link's Beef Jerky made from prime

New Zealand beef, open and eat – now *that's* instant. So, next time you're in supermarket, use your noodle, buy some Jack Link's and feed your wildside.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO MUNCH ON SOME BEEF JERKY?

● The 3 p.m. slug:
Wherever you are,

at work, in the car or just couch chilling, grab some jerky whenever those nasty hangry moments strike.

● Beers and jerky:
What more can we say? They're the perfect pair!

● Post gym snack:
Great fit for guys on the go looking for a high protein tasty snack.



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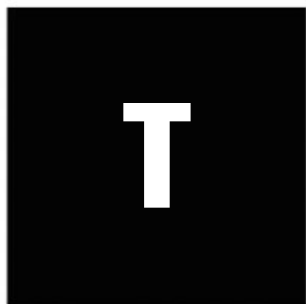
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The New

Mile-High Club

ONE WOMAN'S QUEST TO ACHIEVE ORGASM AT 5,000 FEET

BY MÉLANIE BERLIET



he boyfriend and I are getting busy, when I suddenly feel the Earth move. Only this time, the Earth is thousands of feet below us. Our tryst is cut short by some turbulence, and I'm brought back to our less-than-romantic surroundings in the six-passenger cabin of Amelia, a rickety Piper Cherokee 6 aircraft equipped with heart-shaped pillows, plastic champagne flutes, and a

polyester blanket. I try to get back in the mood, but I can't help thinking of what lies behind the thin white curtain just three feet from us: our pilot, Kent Dobbins, an affable, grey-haired man who seems like the "blushing" type.

Checking the "Join Mile-High Club" box off my bucket list is supposed to be a fun way for my boyfriend and I to celebrate our anniversary. Although the process of entry might seem straightforward (find willing partner, wait for plane to rise to 5,280 feet, go for it), carrying out these steps can be tricky. The logistics of waiting for the right time – free from turbulence and vigilant flight attendants – can be frustrating in itself. Then there's the issue of moving within a coffin-size bathroom, not to mention the mandatory (and decidedly unsexy) task of sanitising the toilet seat. It's probably why, according to surveys, only four percent of Americans have achieved in-flight intercourse – even though 33 percent fantasise about it.

So when I heard about the Ohio-based Flamingo Air's Flights of Fancy service – 60 minutes in the sky, complete with champagne, chocolates, and "one very discreet pilot" – I danced an inner jig at the prospect of finally joining a league of sexual adventurers without facing the typical obstacles. While there are a handful of other private airlines offering similar membership – Erotic Airways in Australia, Mile High Flights in England, and the recently launched Love Cloud in Vegas – Flamingo Air has been letting passengers get frisky in the extra-friendly skies since 1991, servicing two couples per week since its inception. Going with the experienced option, my boyfriend and I fork over the US\$425 fee and fly to Cincinnati to celebrate our anniversary in truly high style.

Captain Dobbins welcomes us aboard the 28-foot jet that will

soon become our own personal love nest. Assessing the cramped interior, I quickly realise that there are several degrees of "flying private." Whereas Kimye might charter the equivalent of the Ritz-Carlton to canoodle between the clouds, we seem to have boarded a sleazy hourly motel room specifically designed for quickies. When Amelia's engine erupts, several concerns come to mind: Didn't John F. Kennedy Jr crash in one of these things? Why does the emergency handle seem so complicated? Should we be troubled that Dobbins wears glasses?

As if I need to be reminded of his presence, the pilot's voice booms from behind the sheet: "Once we cross the river, you can take your seat belts off, if you know what I mean. That's the last you'll hear from me," he says. "Unless there's an emergency, obviously."

The only thing to do is pop open the US\$4.99 bottle of André Brut and get comfortable. The glowing sunset, combined with the liquid courage of the bubbly, reminds me of our mission. We spot the river. "Let's get naked," I announce.

Stripping seductively in tight quarters isn't an option, but the teamwork required serves as effective foreplay. Or so I tell myself. Honestly, I'm less turned on than focused on the task at hand: Must achieve high-altitude orgasm.

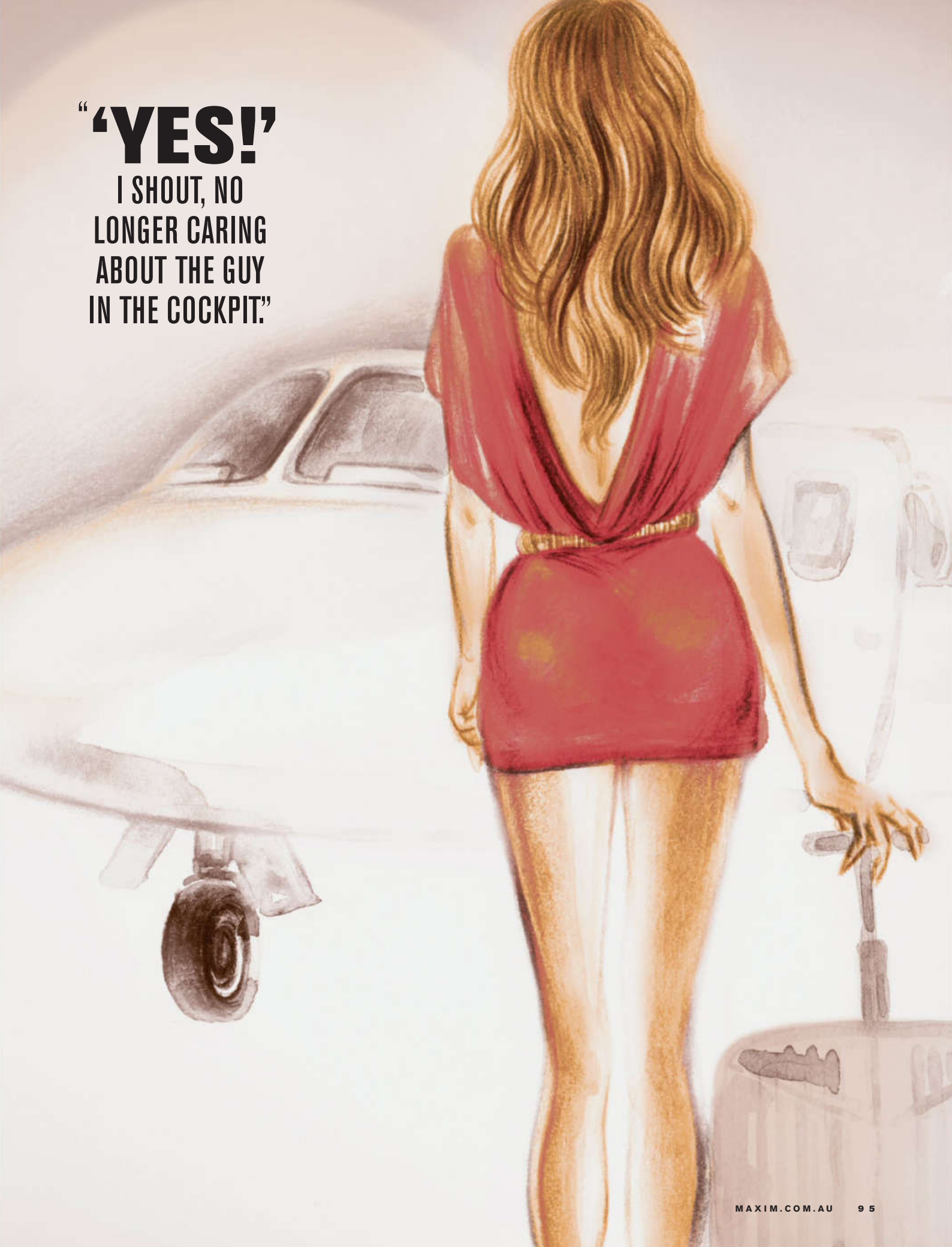
When my boyfriend beckons me to kneel before him, I smile coyly while searching for a comfortable position on a floor that vibrates with disconcerting intensity. I jump on him, and we start to get into the groove – until my elbow takes a massive hit from the turbulence. Then I see the river again, our signal that it's time to wrap things up. I reapply myself as quickly as possible until I reach my goal. "Yes!" I shout, no longer caring about our chaperone in the cockpit.

After we land, we're greeted by owners David MacDonald and Sharon McGee, who present us with a certificate: "This is to certify that Mélanie Berliet performed the prescribed ritual and became eligible for membership in this exclusive club."

Some might argue that my boyfriend and I took the easy way out, bypassing the old-fashioned way of joining the Mile-High Club. That Flamingo Air cheats the system by offering a watered-down version of the fantasy that removes the illicit thrill of getting caught. But our adventure wasn't without its hurdles, and I'll take the freedom to howl with abandon over the rush of getting away with the act on a crowded plane any day. ■

“YES!”

**I SHOUT, NO
LONGER CARING
ABOUT THE GUY
IN THE COCKPIT.”**



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Callan Mulvey

INTERVIEW BY SANTI PINTADO

From roles in Australian dramas such as *Underbelly* and *Bikie Wars: Brothers In Arms* to big-screen hits like *Zero Dark Thirty* and the upcoming *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, Callan Mulvey is heating up Hollywood fast. He chats to us about his job, women, and his latest gig as a wealthy beach club owner in the black comedy thriller **KILL ME THREE TIMES**, alongside Simon Pegg and fellow Aussies Luke Hemsworth, Sullivan Stapleton, and Teresa Palmer

HOW DID YOUR ROLE IN KILL ME THREE TIMES COME ABOUT?

I read the script and loved it. It's a black comedy with intertwining stories of desperation and greed and my character is a broken man filled with self-loathing who deals with losing his wife in the worst way possible. Essentially, I'm the 'bad guy' but it's my job to create some sort of depth, dimension and complexity to this type of character.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT DOING THIS FILM?

We had an amazing crew and our cast were f-king brilliant. I loved the entire cast so much.

I'm good friends with Sullivan and Luke so it's great to be able to work with mates.

DESCRIBE SIMON PEGG.

He is incredibly intelligent, quick witted and, as everyone knows, a very funny guy.

DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO BE A PROFESSIONAL ACTOR?

I wanted to be Magnum, P.I.. Why? Watch *Magnum, P.I.* through the eyes of an eight-year-old boy. Later on, I wanted to be a cinematographer. I'm most in awe of the cinematographer on set. Some of the best cinematographers in the world are Australian.

"I'M AN ACTOR, WE'RE THE LAST PEOPLE YOU WANT IN A FIGHT."



WHAT'S BEEN YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT?

Pretty much all 730 days between the ages of 13 and 15. That was one LONG, embarrassing moment.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR?

A Renault station wagon that was an absolute piece of shit. It needed a new everything and sat in a garage for about six months whilst my dreams of 'restoring it' played out. The sad delusions of a 15-year-old.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT WOMEN OVER THE YEARS?

They should be running things and deserve to be paid more than us. Surely the gender who can do more than one thing at a time deserve a higher pay grade because, let's be honest, they are infinitely more productive.

GOT A FAVOURITE CURSE WORD?

F-k it. It feels very Australian both in tone and intention. Like most curse words, it has a wide range of connotations and applications.

WHAT CAN WE GET YOU AT THE BAR?

Sparkling mineral water, which provides Luke Hemsworth and Sullivan Stapleton with much piss-taking joy.

RIGHT. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE WORST HANGOVER YOU'VE HAD?

Too many to count. Hence the sparkling mineral water.

DO YOU HAVE A PARTY TRICK?

With or without 16 beers? If with, the tricks are infinite. Without, I make a mean Chai Latte.

BOOM! WHAT'S ONE THING TO REMEMBER IN A FIGHT?

Always bring a stuntman or five. I'll meet the guys back at that new organic, paleo café where the frappuccinos are on me. Afterwards, I can help them discuss feelings and process the emotional pain. I'm an actor, we're the last people you want in a fight.

DO YOU HAVE A SCAR THAT TELLS A STORY?

I have a couple but the obvious is the one on my chin courtesy of the non-collapsible steering column in my '76 Statesman Caprice after I was hit head on at 100km/h. I still love that car. May she rest in peace.



TURN THE PAGE TO FIND OUT ALL ABOUT CALLAN'S LAST DAY ON EARTH

How do you want to go?

Painlessly. **Do you have any deathbed confessions?**

I can't tell you now unless you're planning to kill me at the end of this interview. **What's your last meal?** French fries in a bread roll and chocolate cake and ice cream washed down with Melbourne Bitter.

Are you going to Heaven or Hell? I'll be seeking absolution in purgatory because that's where all actors belong – for being so self-absorbed. **If you end up getting into Heaven or Hell what do you say to God or the Devil when you get there?** Will anyone let me in. Either/or will do. **What's the greatest Callan Mulvey scene that never made it on screen?**

We need to go back a page to my answer about 16 beers and party tricks. **To whom on Earth do you owe an apology?** My mother – where should I start? **What's your greatest achievement during your time on earth?** Kindness and humility. Hopefully I have some more time on earth to achieve this.

What's the dumbest thing you ever did on Earth? All 730 days between the ages of 17 and 19. Again, one long, dumb thing after another. **Name one thing you're glad you'll never have to do again.** Be 13. Happy to not be 13 again.

What are your mates saying over your casket? Not much.

"Yeeeeew! Rest in peace ya Chai Latte c-t."

What can I say, my mates are Australian men. **What's written on your tombstone?**

Hopefully they'll just throw the ashes under a tree. I'd like to hope "Loving father and good husband" but I couldn't be certain someone wouldn't take a sharpie to it and write "Chai Latte C-t". Not to name names... Luke Hemsworth and Sullivan Stapleton. **Got any last words?** F-k it.

"MY LAST MEAL?
FRENCH FRIES IN A
BREAD ROLL AND
CHOCOLATE CAKE
AND ICE CREAM,
WASHED DOWN WITH
MELBOURNE BITTER."

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